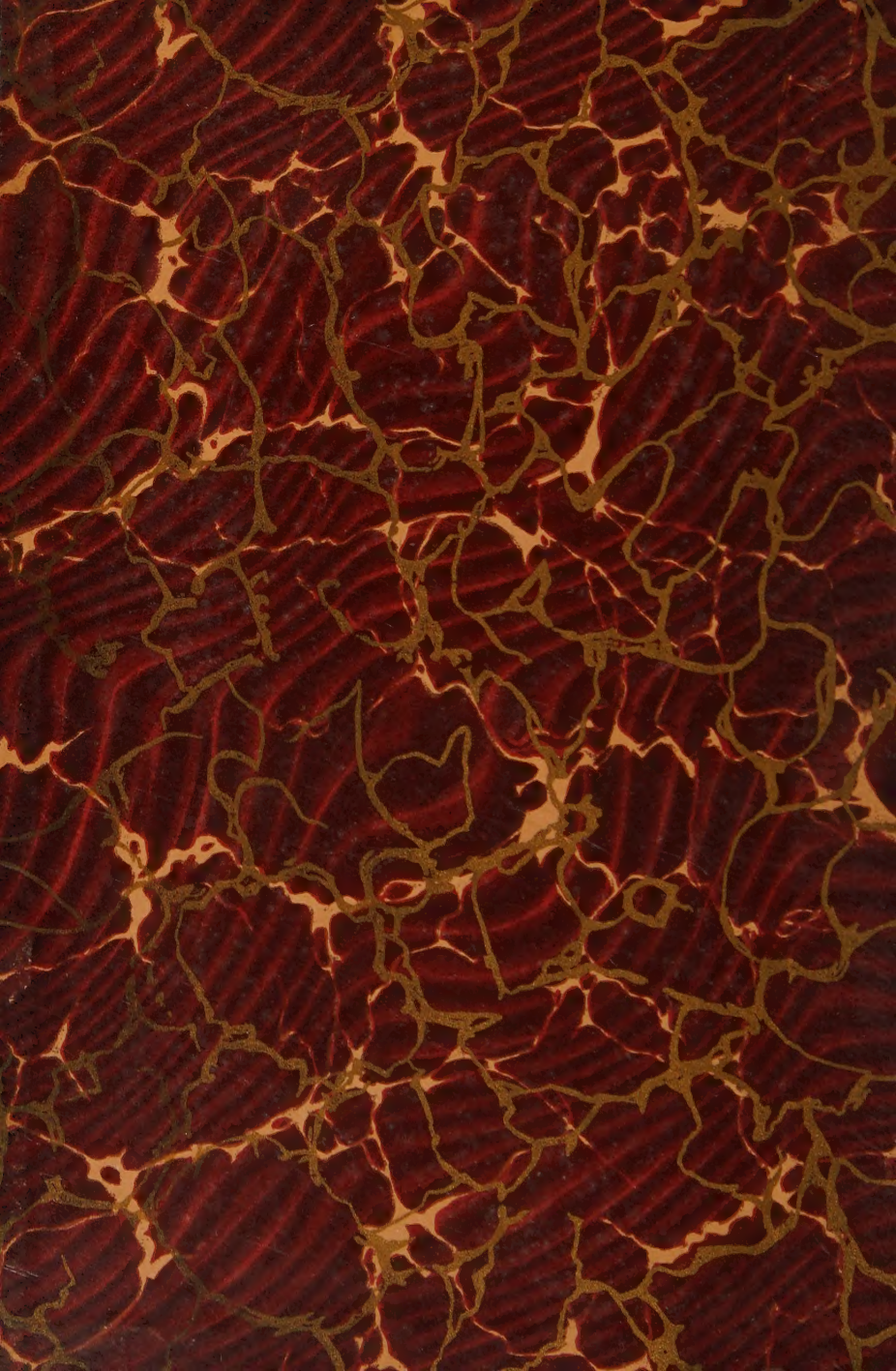
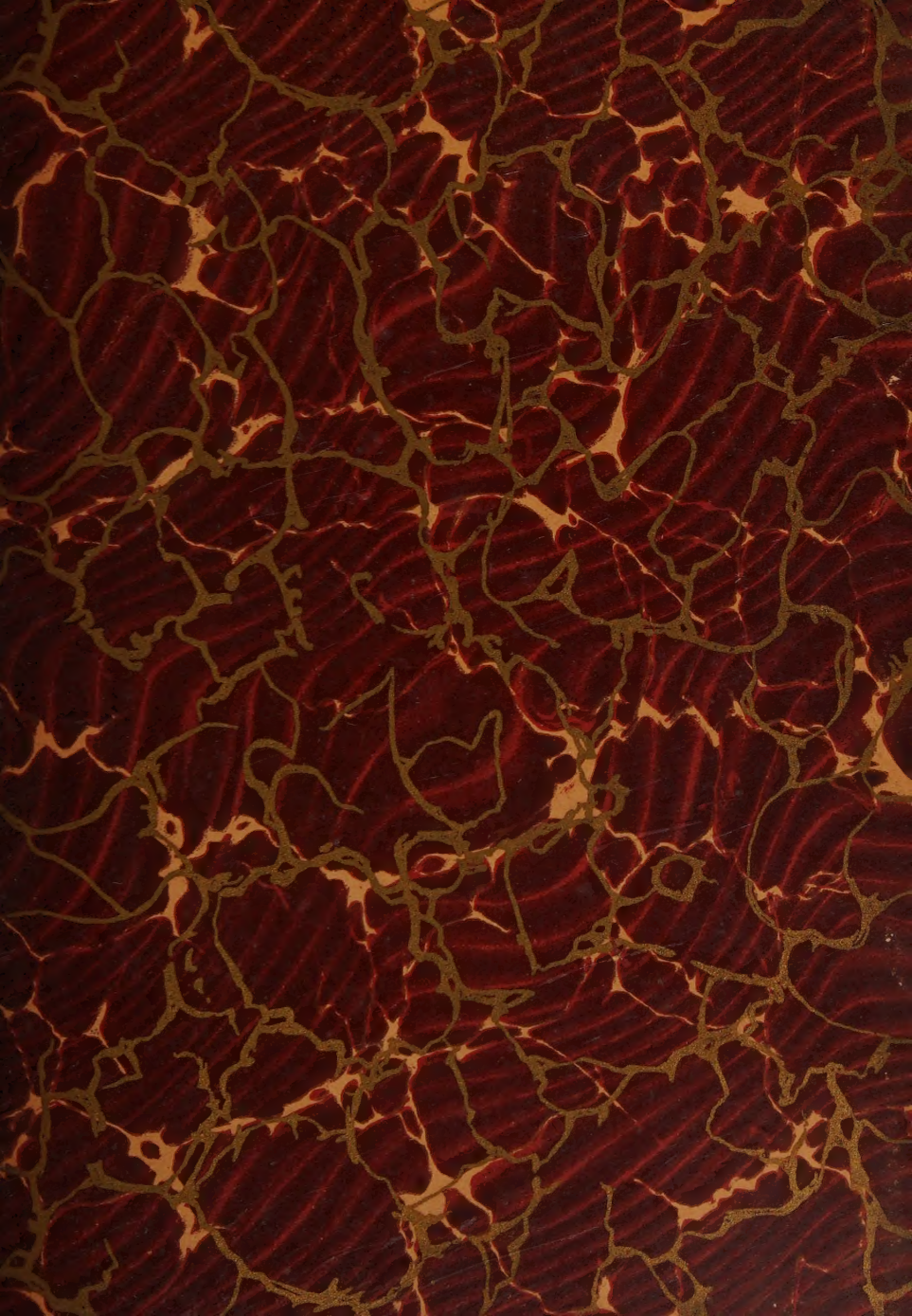


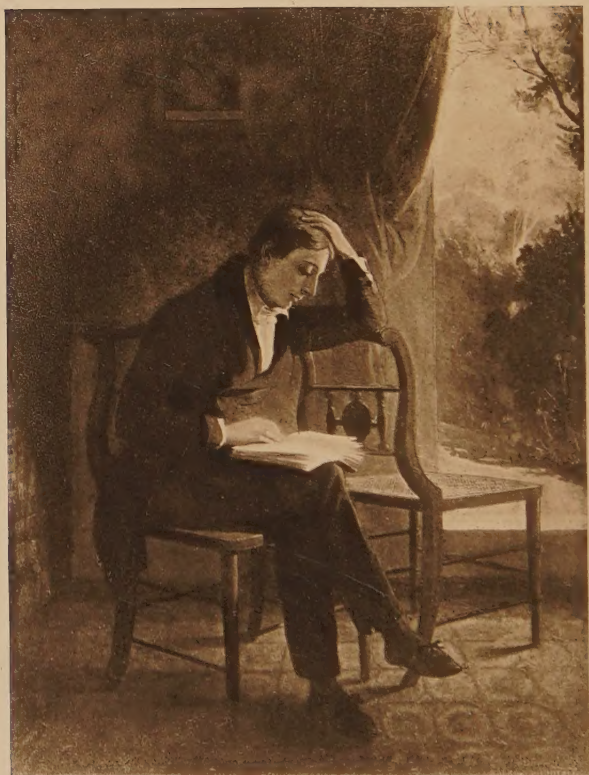












At Hampstead in 1849

Autograph Poets

THE COMPLETE
POETICAL WORKS OF
JOHN KEATS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

(The Riverside Press Cambridge)

1912



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

JOHN KEATS was born in Finsbury, London, on either the 29th or the 31st of October, 1795. He died in an apartment overlooking the Piazza di Spagna, Rome, February 23, 1821. Thus his life was a brief span of a few months more than twenty-five years, and as his first acknowledged verses were written in the autumn of 1813, and his last sonnet was composed in the autumn of 1820, his poetical career was seven years long.

His father, Thomas Keats, was not a Londoner by birth, but came from the country to the town early, and was head hostler in a livery stable before he was twenty. He married Frances Jennings, the daughter of his master, who thereupon retired from business, leaving it in the hands of his son-in-law. The young couple lived over the stable at first, but when their family increased, they removed to a house in the neighborhood. John Keats was the first born. He had two brothers and a sister who grew to maturity. George Keats was sixteen months his junior; Thomas was four years younger, and Fanny, who was born in 1803, was a girl of ten when John Keats was making his first serious ventures in poetry.

The little that is known of Keats's parents is yet sufficient to show them persons of generous qualities and lively temperament. They were prosperous in their lives, and meant to better the condition of their children, so they sent the boys to good schools. The father died when John Keats was in his tenth year, and his mother shortly after married a man who appears to have been her husband's successor in business as well as in affections, but the marriage proved an unhappy one; there was a separation, and the stepfather scarcely came into the boy's life to affect him for good or for ill. He was still a school-boy, not yet fifteen, when his mother died, and he grieved for her with the force of a passionate nature that through a short life was to find various modes of expressing its keen sensibility.

As Keats went early to school, the influences which came most forcibly into his boyhood were from his brothers and schoolmates. Tom, the youngest brother, was always frail. George, who was nearer John's age, was like him in spirit and more robust.

The school which the boys attended was kept by the Rev. John Clarke at Enfield, and a son of Mr. Clarke was Charles Cowden Clarke, the 'ever young-hearted' as his happy-natured wife calls him, who was seven or eight years the senior of John Keats, but became his intimate friend and remained such through his life. The boyish impulsiveness which had its rude expression in animal spirits turned in youth into a headlong eagerness for books before, during, and after school hours. According to Clarke, Keats won all the literature prizes of the school, and took upon himself for fun the translation of the entire *Æneid* into prose.

The death of Keats's mother brought an interruption to his schooling. The

grandmother, who was still living, created a trust for the benefit of the Keats children, and committed its care to two guardians, one of whom, Mr. Richard Abbey, was the active trustee, and though the fund seems to have been reasonably sufficient to protect the young people against the ordinary demands for a living, both John and George Keats seem always to have been sorely pinched for means. Mr. Abbey at once removed John Keats from school and had him apprenticed to a surgeon, Mr. Hammond, for a term of five years.

He was just fifteen when he began thus to equip himself for a place in the world, and for a little more than five years he was in training for the practice of medicine and surgery. His apprenticeship to Mr. Hammond did not last as long as this, for the indentures were cancelled about a year before the term expired, but Keats then went up to London to continue his studies at St. Thomas's and Guy's hospitals. He passed with credit his examination as licentiate at Apothecaries' Hall, July 26, 1815, and received an appointment at Guy's in the March following. It does not appear exactly when he abandoned his profession, but not later than the summer of 1816, when he was approaching his majority, he laid aside his instruments, never to resume them. It is not easy to reckon the contribution which these years of study and of brief practice in the medical art made to his intellectual, much less to his poetical development.

There was about a year's space between Keats's abandonment of his profession and his occupation upon a long and serious poem. The group in this volume entitled 'Early Poems' gives the product of that period. His appearance has been described by many, and is thus summed up by Mr. Colvin: 'A small, handsome, ardent-looking youth—the stature little over five feet; the figure compact and well turned, with the neck thrust eagerly forward, carrying a strong and shapely head set off by thickly clustering gold-brown hair; the features powerful, finished, and mobile; the mouth rich and wide, with an expression at once combative and sensitive in the extreme; the forehead not high, but broad and strong; the eyebrows nobly arched, and eyes hazel-brown, liquid-flashing, visibly inspired—"an eye that had an inward look, perfectly divine, like a Delphian priestess who saw visions."'

Keats was in London and its neighborhood during most of this year, but after the publication of his first volume of poems he went to the Isle of Wight and later to the seashore, and soon began to occupy himself with his serious labor of 'Endymion.' While he was working upon this poem he wrote but few verses. His letters, however, show him immersed in literature and the friendships which with him were so identified with literature.

'Endymion' was published in the spring of 1818, and Keats's own attitude toward his work at this time is well expressed in the sonnet 'When I have fears that I may cease to be,' and in that written on sitting down to read *King Lear* once again.

The publication of 'Endymion' was an important event to Keats and his circle. His earlier volume, the verses which he had since written and shown, and his own

personality, had raised great expectations among his near friends and the few who could discern poetry without waiting for the poet to be famous; and now he was staking all, as it were, upon this single throw. The book was coarsely and roughly handled by the two leading reviews of the day, *Blackwood's* and the *Quarterly*. Criticism in those days was far from impersonal. A poet was condemned or praised, not for his work, but for his politics, the friends he associated with, his religion, and anything in his private life which might be known to the reviewer. Keats knew the worthlessness of much of this criticism, but he felt nevertheless keenly the hostility of what, rightly or wrongly, was looked upon as the supreme court in the republic of letters.

Just at this time George Keats, with his wife, went to America to try fortune in the new world, and Keats immediately afterward took a long walking tour in the north with his friend Brown. In December of the same year, 1818, his brother Tom died. He had been his constant companion and nurse, and was with him at his death. Then, when his whole nature was deeply stirred, he came to know and ardently to love a girl who by turns fascinated and repelled him, until he was completely enthralled, without apparently finding in her the repose which his restless nature needed. The passion which he conceived for Miss Brawne rapidly mounted into a dominant place.

The turbulent experience of death and love acted upon a physical organism predisposed to decay, and soon it was apparent that Keats was himself invaded by the disease of consumption, which had wasted his brother Tom. But before this ravaging of his powers set in, that is, during the first half of 1819, when he was at once deepened by sorrow and excited by love, he wrote that great group of poems which begins with 'The Eve of St. Agnes' and closes with 'Lamia.'

But great as his products were, he had not found his public, and the little property he had was slipping away, so that he was confronted by the fear of poverty as his weakness grew upon him. Nothing seemed to go well with him; his love affair brought him little else than exquisite pain. It is probable that on Keats's side the pride which was so dominant a chord in his nature forbade a man who could scarce support himself, and felt the damp dews of decline chilling his vitality, from seeking refuge in marriage with a girl who was in happier circumstance than he. He tried to turn his gifts into money by aiming at fortune with a play for the popular stage. He tried his hand at work for the periodicals. He even considered the possibility of returning to his profession of surgery for a livelihood. But all these projects failed him, and he turned with an almost savage and certainly sardonic humor to a scheme for flinging at the head of the public a popular poem. 'The Cap and Bells' is a melancholy example of what a great poet can produce who is consumed by a hopeless passion and wasted by disease.

Keats clung to his friends and wrote affectionate letters to his family. His brother George came over from America on a brief business visit, and was disturbed to find John so altered; and scarcely had George returned in January, 1820, than the poet had a sharp attack with loss of blood. He rallied as the

spring came on, and early in the summer saw to the publication of his last volume, containing 'Hyperion, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, Lamia,' and the 'Odes.'

A month after the publication of the volume he was writing to Shelley, who had sent him an invitation to visit him in Pisa: 'There is no doubt that an English winter would put an end to me, and do so in a lingering, hateful manner. Therefore, I must either voyage or journey to Italy, as a soldier marches up to a battery.' In September he put himself into the hands of his cheerful and steadfast friend Severn the artist, and they took passage for Naples. It was when they were detained by winds off the coast of England that Keats wrote his last sonnet, with its veiled homage to Fanny Brawne.

In November, 1820, the travellers reached Rome, and for a little while Keats could take short strolls on the Pincian Hill; but the fatal disease was making rapid progress, and on the 22d of February, 1821, he died, and three days later he was buried in the Protestant cemetery, where upon his gravestone may be read the words which Keats had said of himself: —

'Here lies one whose name was writ in water.'

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EARLY POEMS

IN this group are included the contents of the volume *Poems by John Keats*, published in March, 1817, as well as certain

poems composed before the publication of *Endymion*. The order followed is as nearly chronological as the evidence permits.

IMITATION OF SPENSER

Lord Houghton states, on the authority of the notes of Charles Armitage Brown, given to him in Florence in 1832, that this was the earliest known composition of Keats, and that it was written during his residence in Edmonton at the end of his eighteenth year, which would make the date in the autumn of 1813. The poem was included in the 1817 volume, which bore on its title-page this motto:—

What more felicity can fall to creature
Than to enjoy delight with liberty?
Fate of the Butterfly. — SPENSER.

Now Morning from her orient chamber
came,
And her first footsteps touch'd a verdant
hill;
Crowning its lawny crest with amber
flame,
Silv'ring the untainted gushes of its rill;
Which, pure from mossy beds, did down
distil,
And after parting beds of simple flowers,
By many streams a little lake did fill,
Which round its marge reflected woven
bowers,
And, in its middle space, a sky that never
lowers.

There the kingfisher saw his plumage
bright,
Vying with fish of brilliant dye below;
Whose silken fins, and golden scales' light
Cast upward, through the waves, a ruby
glow:
There saw the swan his neck of arched
snow,

And oar'd himself along with majesty;
Sparkled his jetty eyes; his feet did show
Beneath the waves like Afric's ebony,
And on his back a fay reclined voluptuously.

Ah! could I tell the wonders of an isle
That in that fairest lake had placed been,
I could e'en Dido of her grief beguile;
Or rob from aged Lear his bitter teen:
For sure so fair a place was never seen,
Of all that ever charm'd romantic eye:
It seem'd an emerald in the silver sheen
Of the bright waters; or as when on high,
Through clouds of fleecy white, laughs the
œrulean sky.

And all around it dipp'd luxuriously
Sloping of verdure through the glossy
tide,
Which, as it were in gentle amity,
Rippled delighted up the flowery side;
As if to glean the ruddy tears, it tried,
Which fell profusely from the rose-tree
stem!
Haply it was the workings of its pride,
In strife to throw upon the shore a gem
Outvying all the buds in Flora's diadem.

ON DEATH

Assigned by George Keats to the year 1814,
and first printed in Forman's edition, 1883.

CAN death be sleep, when life is but a
dream,
And scenes of bliss pass as a phantom by?

The transient pleasures as a vision seem,
And yet we think the greatest pain 's to
die.

How strange it is that man on earth should
roam,

And lead a life of woe, but not forsake
His rugged path; nor dare he view alone
His future doom, which is but to awake.

TO CHATTERTON

First printed in *Life, Letters, and Literary Remains*, but undated. Keats's admiration of Chatterton was early and constant.

O CHATTERTON! how very sad thy fate!
Dear child of sorrow — son of misery!
How soon the film of death obscur'd that
eye,

Whence Genius mildly flash'd, and high
debate.

How soon that voice, majestic and elate,
Melted in dying numbers! Oh! how
nigh

Was night to thy fair morning. Thou
didst die

A half-blown flow'ret which cold blasts
amate.

But this is past: thou art among the stars
Of highest Heaven: to the rolling spheres
Thou sweetly singest: nought thy hymning
mars,

Above the ingrate world and human
fears.

On earth the good man base detraction
bars

From thy fair name, and waters it with
tears.

TO BYRON

The date of December, 1814, is given to this sonnet by Lord Houghton in *Life, Letters, and Literary Remains*, where it was first published.

BYRON! how sweetly sad thy melody!
Attuning still the soul to tenderness,

As if soft Pity, with unusual stress,
Had touch'd her plaintive lute, and thou,
being by,
Hadst caught the tones, nor suffer'd them
to die.

O'ershadowing sorrow doth not make
thee less

Delightful: thou thy griefs dost dress
With a bright halo, shining beamily,
As when a cloud the golden moon doth veil,
Its sides are ting'd with a resplendent
glow,

Through the dark robe oft amber rays pre-
vail,

And like fair veins in sable marble flow;
Still warble, dying swan! still tell the tale,
The enchanting tale, the tale of pleasing
woe.

'WOMAN! WHEN I BEHOLD THEE FLIPPANT, VAIN'

In the 1817 volume, where this poem was first published, with no title, it is placed at the end of a group of poems which are thus advertised on the leaf containing the dedication: 'The Short Pieces in the middle of the Book as well as some of the Sonnets, were written at an earlier period than the rest of the Poems.' In the absence of any documentary evidence, it seems reasonable to place it near the 'Imitation of Spenser' rather than near 'Calidore.'

WOMAN! when I behold thee flippant, vain,
Inconstant, childish, proud, and full of
fancies;

Without that modest softening that en-
hances

The downcast eye, repentant of the pain
That its mild light creates to heal again:

E'en then, elate, my spirit leaps, and
prances,

E'en then my soul with exultation dances
For that to love, so long, I've dormant
lain:

But when I see thee meek, and kind, and
tender,

Heavens ! how desperately do I adore
 Thy winning graces ; — to be thy defender
 I hotly burn — to be a Calidore —
 A very Red Cross Knight — a stout Le-
 ander —

Might I be loved by thee like these of
 yore.

Light feet, dark violet eyes, and parted
 hair ;

Soft dimpled hands, white neck, and
 creamy breast,

Are things on which the dazzled senses
 rest

Till the fond, fixed eyes, forget they stare.
 From such fine pictures, heavens ! I cannot
 dare

To turn my admiration, though unpos-
 sess'd

They be of what is worthy, — though not
 drest

In lovely modesty, and virtues rare.

Yet these I leave as thoughtless as a lark ;

These lures I straight forget, — e'en ere
 I dine,

Or thrice my palate moisten : but when I
 mark

Such charms with mild intelligences
 shine,

My ear is open like a greedy shark,
 To catch the tunings of a voice divine.

Ah ! who can e'er forget so fair a being ?

Who can forget her half-retiring sweets ?

God ! she is like a milk-white lamb that
 bleats

For man's protection. Surely the All-see-
 ing,

Who joys to see us with his gifts agree-
 ing,

Will never give him pinions, who intreats
 Such innocence to ruin, — who vilely
 cheats

A dove-like bosom. In truth there is no
 freeing

One's thoughts from such a beauty ; when
 I hear

A lay that once I saw her hand awake,

Her form seems floating palpable, and near ;
 Had I e'er seen her from an harbour take
 A dewy flower, oft would that hand appear,
 And o'er my eyes the trembling moisture
 shake.

TO SOME LADIES

This and the poem following were included
 in the 1817 volume. George Keats says fur-
 ther that it was 'written on receiving a copy
 of Tom Moore's "Golden Chain" and a most
 beautiful Dome shaped shell from a Lady.'
 The exact title of Moore's poem is 'The
 Wreath and the Chain,' and it will be readily
 seen how expressly imitative these lines are of
 Moore's verse in general. The poems are not
 dated, but they are the first in a group stated
 by Keats to have been 'written at an earlier
 period than the rest of the Poems ;' it is safe to
 assume that they belong very near the begin-
 ning of Keats's poetical career. It is quite
 likely that they were included in the volume a
 few years later on personal grounds.

WHAT though while the wonders of nature
 exploring,

I cannot your light, mazy footsteps at-
 tend ;

Nor listen to accents, that almost adoring,
 Bless Cynthia's face, the enthusiast's
 friend :

Yet over the steep, whence the mountain-
 stream rushes,

With you, kindest friends, in idea I rove ;
 Mark the clear tumbling crystal, its pas-
 sionate gushes,

Its spray that the wild flower kindly
 bedews.

Why linger you so, the wild labyrinth
 strolling ?

Why breathless, unable your bliss to de-
 clare ?

Ah ! you list to the nightingale's tender
 condoling,

Responsive to sylphs, in the moon-beamy
 air.

'Tis morn, and the flowers with dew are
yet drooping,

I see you are treading the verge of the
sea:

And now ! ah, I see it — you just now are
stooping

To pick up the keepsake intended for me.

If a cherub, on pinions of silver descending,
Had brought me a gem from the fret-
work of heaven;

And smiles, with his star-cheering voice
sweetly blending,

The blessings of Tighe had melodiously
given;

It had not created a warmer emotion

Than the present, fair nymphs, I was
blest with from you;

Than the shell, from the bright golden
sands of the ocean,

Which the emerald waves at your feet
gladly threw.

For, indeed, 't is a sweet and peculiar plea-
sure,

(And blissful is he who such happiness
finds,)

To possess but a span of the hour of leisure,
In elegant, pure, and aerial minds.

ON RECEIVING A CURIOUS SHELL AND A COPY OF VERSES FROM THE SAME LADIES

HAST thou from the caves of Golconda, a
gem

Pure as the ice-drop that froze on the
mountain ?

Bright as the humming-bird's green diadem,
When it flutters in sunbeams that shine
through a fountain ?

Hast thou a goblet for dark sparkling wine ?
That goblet right heavy, and massy, and
gold ?

And splendidly mark'd with the story di-
vine

Of Armida the fair, and Rinaldo the
bold ?

Hast thou a steed with a mane richly flow-
ing ?

Hast thou a sword that thine enemy's
smart is ?

Hast thou a trumpet rich melodies blowing ?
And wear'st thou the shield of the fam'd
Britomartis ?

What is it that hangs from thy shoulder,
so brave,

Embroidered with many a spring peering
flower ?

Is it a scarf that thy fair lady gave ?

And hastest thou now to that fair lady's
bower ?

Ah ! courteous Sir Knight, with large joy
thou art crown'd;

Full many the glories that brighten thy
youth !

I will tell thee my blisses, which richly
abound

In magical powers to bless, and to soothe.

On this scroll thou seest written in charac-
ters fair

A sun-beamy tale of a wreath, and a
chain:

And, warrior, it nurtures the property rare
Of charming my mind from the trammels
of pain.

This canopy mark: 't is the work of a fay;
Beneath its rich shade did King Oberon
languish,

When lovely Titania was far, far away,
And cruelly left him to sorrow, and an-
guish.

There, oft would he bring from his soft-
sighing lute

Wild strains to which, spell-bound, the
nightingales listen'd ;

The wondering spirits of heaven were
mute,
And tears 'mong the dewdrops of morn-
ing oft glistened.

In this little dome, all those melodies
strange,
Soft, plaintive, and melting, for ever will
sigh;
Nor e'er will the notes from their tender-
ness change;
Nor e'er will the music of Oberon die.

So, when I am in a voluptuous vein,
I pillow my head on the sweets of the
rose,
And list to the tale of the wreath, and the
chain,
Till its echoes depart; then I sink to re-
pose.

Adieu, valiant Eric! with joy thou art
crown'd;
Full many the glories that brighten thy
youth,
I too have my blisses, which richly abound
In magical powers, to bless and to soothe.

WRITTEN ON THE DAY THAT MR. LEIGH HUNT LEFT PRISON

Either the 2d or 3d of February, 1815.
Charles Cowden Clarke, to whom Keats
showed the sonnet, writes in his recollections:
'This I feel to be the first proof I had re-
ceived of his having committed himself in
verse; and how clearly do I recollect the con-
scious look and hesitation with which he of-
fered it! There are some momentary glances
by beloved friends that fade only with life.'
The sonnet was printed in the 1817 volume.

WHAT though, for showing truth to flat-
ter'd state,
Kind Hunt was shut in prison, yet has
he,
In his immortal spirit, been as free

As the sky-searching lark, and as elate.
Minion of grandeur! think you he did
wait?

Think you he nought but prison-walls
did see,
Till, so unwilling, thou unturn'dst the
key?

Ah, no! far happier, nobler was his fate!
In Spenser's halls he strayed, and bowers
fair,
Culling enchanted flowers; and he flew
With daring Milton through the fields of
air:

To regions of his own his genius true
Took happy flights. Who shall his fame
impair

When thou art dead, and all thy wretched
crew?

TO HOPE

Keats dates this poem in the volume of 1817,
February, 1815.

WHEN by my solitary hearth I sit,
And hateful thoughts enwrap my soul in
gloom;
When no fair dreams before my 'mind's
eye' flit,
And the bare heath of life presents no
bloom;
Sweet Hope, ethereal balm upon me
shed,
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my
head.

Whene'er I wander, at the fall of night,
Where woven boughs shut out the moon's
bright ray,
Should sad Despondency my musings
fright,
And frown, to drive fair Cheerfulness
away,
Peep with the moonbeams through the
leafy roof,
And keep that fiend Despondence far
aloof.

Should Disappointment, parent of Despair,
Strive for her son to seize my careless
heart;

When, like a cloud, he sits upon the air,
Preparing on his spell-bound prey to
dart:

Chase him away, sweet Hope, with
visage bright,
And fright him as the morning fright-
ens night !

Whene'er the fate of those I hold most dear
Tells to my fearful breast a tale of sorrow,
O bright-eyed Hope, my morbid fancy
cheer;

Let me awhile thy sweetest comforts
borrow:

Thy heaven-born radiance around me
shed,
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my
head !

Should e'er unhappy love my bosom pain,
From cruel parents, or relentless fair ;
O let me think it is not quite in vain
To sigh out sonnets to the midnight air !
Sweet Hope, ethereal balm upon me
shed,
And wave thy silver pinions o'er my
head.

In the long vista of the years to roll,
Let me not see our country's honour fade:
O let me see our land retain her soul,
Her pride, her freedom; and not free-
dom's shade.
From thy bright eyes unusual bright-
ness shed —
Beneath thy pinions canopy my head !

Let me not see the patriot's high bequest,
Great Liberty ! how great in plain attire!
With the base purple of a court oppress'd,
Bowing her head, and ready to expire:
But let me see thee stoop from hea-
ven on wings
That fill the skies with silver glitter-
ings !

And as, in sparkling majesty, a star
Gilds the bright summit of some gloomy
cloud;

Brightening the half veil'd face of heaven
afar:

So, when dark thoughts my boding spirit
shroud,
Sweet Hope, celestial influence round
me shed,
Waving thy silver pinions o'er my head.

ODE TO APOLLO

The *Ode* and the *Hymn* which follows were
first printed by Lord Houghton in *Life, Letters
and Literary Remains*; the former is there
dated February, 1815.

In thy western halls of gold
When thou sittest in thy state,
Bards, that erst sublimely told
Heroic deeds, and sang of fate,
With fervour seize their adamantine
lyres,
Whose chords are solid rays, and twinkle
radiant fires.

Here Homer with his nervous arms
Strikes the twanging harp of war,
And even the western splendour warms,
While the trumpets sound afar:
But, what creates the most intense sur-
prise,
His soul looks out through renovated eyes.

Then, through thy Temple wide, melodi-
ous swells
The sweet majestic tone of Maro's lyre:
The soul delighted on each accent
dwells, —
Enraptur'd dwells, — not daring to re-
spire,
The while he tells of grief around a funeral
pyre.

'T is awful silence then again;
Expectant stand the spheres;
Breathless the laurell'd peers,

Nor move, till ends the lofty strain,
 Nor move till Milton's tuneful thunders
 cease,
 And leave once more the ravish'd heavens
 in peace.

Thou biddest Shakspeare wave his hand,
 And quickly forward spring
 The Passions — a terrific band —
 And each vibrates the string
 That with its tyrant temper best accords,
 While from their Master's lips pour forth
 the inspiring words.

A silver trumpet Spenser blows,
 And, as its martial notes to silence flee,
 From a virgin chorus flows
 A hymn in praise of spotless Chastity.
 'T is still! Wild warblings from the
 Æolian lyre
 Enchantment softly breathe, and trem-
 blingly expire.

Next thy Tasso's ardent numbers
 Float along the pleasèd air,
 Calling youth from idle slumbers,
 Rousing them from Pleasure's lair: —
 Then o'er the strings his fingers gently
 move,
 And melt the soul to pity and to love.

But when *Thou* joinest with the Nine,
 And all the powers of song combine,
 We listen here on earth:
 The dying tones that fill the air,
 And charm the ear of evening fair,
 From thee, Great God of Bards, receive
 their heavenly birth.

HYMN TO APOLLO

God of the golden bow,
 And of the golden lyre,
 And of the golden hair,
 And of the golden fire,
 Charioteer
 Of the patient year,

Where — where slept thine ire,
 When like a blank idiot I put on thy wreath,
 Thy laurel, thy glory,
 The light of thy story,
 Or was I a worm — too low crawling, for
 death?

O Delphic Apollo!

The Thunderer grasp'd and grasp'd,
 The Thunderer frown'd and frown'd;
 The eagle's feathery mane
 For wrath became stiffen'd — the sound
 Of breeding thunder
 Went drowsily under,
 Muttering to be unbound.
 O why didst thou pity, and for a worm
 Why touch thy soft lute
 Till the thunder was mute,
 Why was not I crush'd — such a pitiful
 germ?

O Delphic Apollo!

The Pleiades were up,
 Watching the silent air;
 The seeds and roots in the Earth
 Were swelling for summer fare;
 The Ocean, its neighbour,
 Was at its old labour,
 When, who — who did dare
 To tie, like a madman, thy plant round his
 brow,
 And grin and look proudly,
 And blaspheme so loudly,
 And live for that honour, to stoop to thee
 now?

O Delphic Apollo!

TO A YOUNG LADY WHO SENT ME A LAUREL CROWN

First printed by Lord Houghton in the *Life,*
Letters and Literary Remains, but undated.

FRESH morning gusts have blown away all
 fear
 From my glad bosom, — now from gloom
 iness
 I mount for ever — not an atom less

Than the proud laurel shall content my
bier.

No ! by the eternal stars ! or why sit here
In the Sun's eye, and 'gainst my temples
press

Apollo's very leaves, woven to bless
By thy white fingers and thy spirit clear.

Lo ! who dares say, 'Do this ?' Who dares
call down

My will from its high purpose ? Who
say, 'Stand,'

Or 'Go ?' This mighty moment I would
frown

On abject Cæsars — not the stoutest
band

Of mailed heroes should tear off my crown :
Yet would I kneel and kiss thy gentle
hand !

SONNET

Published in the 1817 volume. Lord Houghton states that this sonnet 'was the means of introducing Keats to Mr. Leigh Hunt's society. Mr. Cowden Clarke had brought some of his young friend's verses and read them aloud. Mr. Horace Smith, who happened to be there, was struck with the last six lines, especially the penultimate, saying "what a well condensed expression!" and Keats was shortly after introduced to the literary circle.' This would appear to fix the date as not later than the summer of 1815.

How many bards gild the lapses of time !

A few of them have ever been the food

Of my delighted fancy, — I could brood
Over their beauties, earthly, or sublime :

And often, when I sit me down to rhyme,

These will in throngs before my mind
intrude :

But no confusion, no disturbance rude

Do they occasion; 'tis a pleasing chime.

So the unnumber'd sounds that evening
store;

The songs of birds — the whisp'ring of
the leaves —

The voice of waters — the great bell
that heaves

With solemn sound, — and thousand others
more,

That distance of recognizance bereaves,
Make pleasing music, and not wild uproar.

SONNET

According to Charles Cowden Clarke, this sonnet was written upon Keats first visiting Hunt in the Vale of Health. It was published in the 1817 volume.

KEEN, fitful gusts are whisp'ring here and
there

Among the bushes half leafless, and dry ;

The stars look very cold about the sky,

And I have many miles on foot to fare.

Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air,

Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,

Or of those silver lamps that burn on
high,

Or of the distance from home's pleasant
lair :

For I am brimful of the friendliness

That in a little cottage I have found ;

Of fair-hair'd Milton's eloquent distress,

And all his love for gentle Lyeid drown'd ;

Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,

And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd.

SPENSERIAN STANZA

WRITTEN AT THE CLOSE OF CANTO II.
BOOK V. OF 'THE FAERIE QUEENE'

Given by Lord Houghton in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*, who comments as follows : 'His sympathies were very much on the side of the revolutionary Giant, who "undertook for to repair" the "realms and nations run awry," and to suppress "tyrants that make men subject to their law," "and lordings curbe that commons over-aw," while he grudged the legitimate victory, as he rejected the conservative philosophy, of the "righteous Artegall" and his comrade, the fierce defender of privilege and order. And he expressed in this *ex post facto* prophecy, his conviction of the

ultimate triumph of freedom and equality by the power of transmitted knowledge.' No date is assigned, and the verse may as well be placed in the early period of Keats's acquaintance with Spenser and friendship with Leigh Hunt.

IN after-time, a sage of mickle lore
Yclep'd Typographus, the Giant took,
And did refit his limbs as heretofore,
And made him read in many a learned
book,
And into many a lively legend look;
Thereby in goodly themes so training
him,
That all his brutishness he quite for-
sook,
When, meeting Artegall and Talus grim,
The one he struck stone-blind, the other's
eyes wox dim.

ON LEAVING SOME FRIENDS AT AN EARLY HOUR

Written, as Clarke intimates, in connection with Keats's visits to Leigh Hunt in the Vale of Health. Published in the 1817 volume.

GIVE me a golden pen, and let me lean
On heap'd-up flowers, in regions clear
and far;
Bring me a tablet whiter than a star,
Or hand of hymning angel, when 't is seen
The silver strings of heavenly harp atween:
And let there glide by many a pearly
car,
Pink robes, and wavy hair, and diamond
jar,
And half-discover'd wings, and glances
keen.
The while let music wander round my ears,
And as it reaches each delicious ending,
Let me write down a line of glorious
tone,
And full of many wonders of the spheres:
For what a height my spirit is contend-
ing!
'T is not content so soon to be alone.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

It was Charles Cowden Clarke who was with Keats when the friends made the acquaintance of this translation of Homer by the Elizabethan poet. The two young men had sat up nearly all one night in the summer of 1815 in Clarke's lodging, reading from a folio volume of the book which they had borrowed. Keats left for his own lodgings at dawn, and when Clarke came down to breakfast the next morning, he found this sonnet which Keats had sent him.

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of
gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms
seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his
demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and
bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific — and all his
men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

EPISTLE TO GEORGE FELTON MATHEW

Mathew, who was of Keats's age, was his companion when he first went to London. The two had common tastes in literature and read together, and Mathew also made essays in writing, so that Keats, who was living much in Elizabethan literature at the time, might easily transfer in imagination some of the great deeds of partnership to himself and his friend. It is worth while to note Mathew's own recollection, thirty years later, of the contrast of him-

self with Keats: 'Keats and I, though about the same age, and both inclined to literature, were in many respects as different as two individuals could be. He enjoyed good health — a fine flow of animal spirits — was fond of company — could amuse himself admirably with the frivolities of life — and had great confidence in himself. I, on the other hand, was languid and melancholy — fond of repose — thoughtful beyond my years — and diffident to the last degree.' The epistle is dated November, 1815, in the volume of 1817, where it is the first of a group of three epistles with the motto from Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*:

Among the rest a shepherd (though but young
Yet hartned to his pipe) with all the skill
His few yeeres could, began to fit his quill.

SWEET are the pleasures that to verse belong,

And doubly sweet a brotherhood in song;
Nor can remembrance, Mathew! bring to view

A fate more pleasing, a delight more true
Than that in which the brother Poets joy'd,
Who, with combinèd powers, their wit employ'd

To raise a trophy to the drama's muses.
The thought of this great partnership diffuses

Over the genius-loving heart, a feeling
Of all that's high, and great, and good,
and healing. 10

Too partial friend! fain would I follow thee

Past each horizon of fine poesy;
Fain would I echo back each pleasant note
As o'er Sicilian seas, clear anthems float
'Mong the light skimming gondolas far parted,

Just when the sun his farewell beam has darted

But 't is impossible; far different cares
Beckon me sternly from soft 'Lydian airs,'
And hold my faculties so long in thrall,
That I am oft in doubt whether at all 20
I shall again see Phœbus in the morning:
Or flush'd Aurora in the roseate dawning!

Or a white Naiad in a rippling stream;
Or a rapt seraph in a moonlight beam;
Or again witness what with thee I've seen,
The dew by fairy feet swept from the green,

After a night of some quaint jubilee
Which every elf and fay had come to see:
When bright processions took their airy march

Beneath the curvèd moon's triumphal arch. 30

But might I now each passing moment give

To the coy Muse, with me she would not live

In this dark city, nor would condescend
'Mid contradictions her delights to lend.
Should e'er the fine-eyed maid to me be kind,

Ah! surely it must be whene'er I find
Some flowery spot, sequester'd, wild, romantic,

That often must have seen a poet frantic;

Where oaks, that erst the Druid knew, are growing,

And flowers, the glory of one day, are blowing; 40

Where the dark-leav'd laburnum's drooping clusters

Reflect athwart the stream their yellow lustres,

And intertwined the cassia's arms unite,
With its own drooping buds, but very white.
Where on one side are covert branches hung,

'Mong which the nightingales have always sung

In leafy quiet: where to pry, aloof
Atween the pillars of the sylvan roof,
Would be to find where violet beds were nestling,

And where the bee with cowslip bells was wrestling. 50

There must be too a ruin dark and gloomy,
To say 'Joy not too much in all that's bloomy.'

Yet this is vain — O Mathew, lend thy aid
 To find a place where I may greet the maid —
 Where we may soft humanity put on,
 And sit, and rhyme and think on Chatter-
 ton;
 And that warm-hearted Shakspeare sent to
 meet him
 Four laurell'd spirits, heavenward to en-
 treat him.
 With reverence would we speak of all the
 sages
 Who have left streaks of light athwart
 their ages: 60
 And thou shouldst moralize on Milton's
 blindness,
 And mourn the fearful dearth of human
 kindness
 To those who strove with the bright golden
 wing
 Of genius, to flap away each sting
 Thrown by the pitiless world. We next
 could tell
 Of those who in the cause of freedom fell;
 Of our own Alfred, of Helvetian Tell;
 Of him whose name to ev'ry heart's a
 solace,
 High-minded and unbending William
 Wallace.
 While to the rugged north our musing
 turns, 70
 We well might drop a tear for him, and
 Burns.

Felton! without incitements such as these,
 How vain for me the niggard Muse to
 tease:
 For thee, she will thy every dwelling grace,
 And make 'a sunshine in a shady place:'
 For thou wast once a flowret blooming
 wild,
 Close to the source, bright, pure, and unde-
 fil'd,
 Whence gush the streams of song: in
 happy hour
 Came chaste Diana from her shady bower,
 Just as the sun was from the east uprising;

And, as for him some gift she was devising,
 Beheld thee, pluck'd thee, cast thee in the
 stream 82
 To meet her glorious brother's greeting
 beam.
 I marvel much that thou hast never told
 How, from a flower, into a fish of gold
 Apollo chang'd thee: how thou next didst
 seem
 A black-ey'd swan upon the widening
 stream;
 And when thou first didst in that mirror
 trace
 The placid features of a human face:
 That thou hast never told thy travels
 strange, 90
 And all the wonders of the mazy range
 O'er pebbly crystal, and o'er golden sands;
 Kissing thy daily food from Naiads' pearly
 hands.

TO —

A valentine written in 1816 by Keats for his
 brother George to send to the lady Georgiana
 Wylie, whom he afterward married, was later
 expanded into the following lines. It was in-
 cluded in the 1817 volume. For the original
 valentine see the Notes at the end of this
 volume.

HADST thou liv'd in days of old,
 O what wonders had been told
 Of thy lively countenance,
 And thy humid eyes that dance
 In the midst of their own brightness;
 In the very fane of lightness.
 Over which thine eyebrows, leaning,
 Picture out each lovely meaning:
 In a dainty bend they lie,
 Like to streaks across the sky, 100
 Or the feathers from a crow,
 Fallen on a bed of snow.
 Of thy dark hair, that extends
 Into many graceful bends:
 As the leaves of Hellebore
 Turn to whence they sprung before.
 And behind each ample curl

Peeps the richness of a pearl.
 Downward too flows many a tress
 With a glossy waviness; 20
 Full, and round like globes that rise
 From the censer to the skies
 Through sunny air. Add too, the sweet-
 ness

Of thy honied voice; the neatness
 Of thine ankle lightly turn'd:
 With those beauties scarce discern'd,
 Kept with such sweet privacy,
 That they seldom meet the eye
 Of the little loves that fly
 Round about with eager pry. 30
 Saving when, with freshening lave,
 Thou dipp'st them in the taintless wave;
 Like twin water-lilies, born
 In the coolness of the morn.
 O, if thou hadst breathèd then,
 Now the Muses had been ten.
 Couldst thou wish for lineage higher
 Than twin-sister of Thalia?
 At least for ever, evermore
 Will I call the Graces four. 40

Hadst thou liv'd when chivalry
 Lifted up her lance on high,
 Tell me what thou wouldest have been?
 Ah! I see the silver sheen
 Of thy broider'd, floating vest
 Cov'ring half thine ivory breast:
 Which, O heavens! I should see,
 But that cruel destiny
 Has plac'd a golden cuirass there;
 Keeping secret what is fair. 50
 Like sunbeams in a cloudlet nested
 Thy locks in knightly casque are rested:
 O'er which bend four milky plumes
 Like the gentle lily's blooms
 Springing from a costly vase.
 See with what a stately pace
 Comes thine alabaster steed;
 Servant of heroic deed!
 O'er his loins his trappings glow
 Like the northern lights on snow. 60
 Mount his back! thy sword unsheath!
 Sign of the enchanter's death;
 Bane of every wicked spell;

Silencer of dragon's yell.
 Alas! thou this wilt never do:
 Thou art an enchantress too,
 And wilt surely never spill
 Blood of those whose eyes can kill.

SONNET

Lord Houghton gives the date of 1816. It appears in the Aldine edition of 1876.

As from the darkening gloom a silver dove
 Upsoars, and darts into the eastern light,
 On pinions that nought moves but pure
 delight,
 So fled thy soul into the realms above,
 Regions of peace and everlasting love;
 Where happy spirits, crown'd with cir-
 clets bright
 Of starry beam, and gloriously bedight,
 Taste the high joy none but the blest can
 prove.
 There thou or joinest the immortal quire
 In melodies that even heaven fair
 Fill with superior bliss, or, at desire,
 Of the omnipotent Father, cleav'st the
 air
 On holy message sent — What pleasure's
 higher?
 Wherefore does any grief our joy impair?

SONNET TO SOLITUDE

Published in *The Examiner*, 5 May, 1816, and the first piece printed by Keats. It was re-issued in the 1817 volume.

O SOLITUDE! if I must with thee dwell,
 Let it not be among the jumbled heap
 Of murky buildings; climb with me the
 steep, —
 Nature's observatory, — whence the dell,
 Its flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell,
 May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep
 'Mongst boughs pavilion'd, where the
 deer's swift leap
 Startles the wild bee from the foxglove
 bell.

But though I'll gladly trace these scenes
 with thee,
 Yet the sweet converse of an innocent
 mind,
 Whose words are images of thoughts re-
 fin'd,
 Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be
 Almost the highest bliss of human-kind,
 When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

SONNET

George Keats has a memorandum on this sonnet, 'written in the Fields, June, 1816.' Published in the 1817 volume.

To one who has been long in city pent,
 'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
 And open face of heaven,—to breathe
 a prayer
 Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
 Who is more happy, when, with hearts
 content,
 Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
 Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
 And gentle tale of love and languishment?
 Returning home at evening, with an ear
 Catching the notes of Philomel, — an eye
 Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright ca-
 reer,
 He mourns that day so soon has glided
 by:
 E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
 That falls through the clear ether si-
 lently.

TO A FRIEND WHO SENT ME
SOME ROSES

The friend was Charles J. Wells, author of the dramatic poem *Joseph and his Brethren*, which was published in 1824, when it died almost at once and was recalled to life by a few words printed by D. G. Rossetti in 1863, and has since been reprinted for the curious. In Tom Keats's copy book the sonnet is dated 29 June, 1816. It is included in the volume of 1817.

As late I rambled in the happy fields,
 What time the skylark shakes the tremu-
 lous dew
 From his lush clover covert; — when anew
 Adventurous knights take up their dinted
 shields:
 I saw the sweetest flower wild nature yields,
 A fresh-blown musk-rose; 't was the first
 that threw
 Its sweets upon the summer: graceful it
 grew
 As is the wand that Queen Titania wields.
 And, as I feasted on its fragrancy,
 I thought the garden-rose it far excell'd:
 But when, O Wells! thy roses came to me,
 My sense with their deliciousness was
 spell'd:
 Soft voices had they, that with tender plea
 Whisper'd of peace, and truth, and
 friendliness unquell'd.

SONNET

First printed by Lord Houghton in the *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*, with the date 1816.

OH! how I love, on a fair summer's eve,
 When streams of light pour down the
 golden west,
 And on the balmy zephyrs tranquil rest
 The silver clouds, far — far away to leave
 All meaner thoughts, and take a sweet re-
 priev
 From little cares; to find, with easy quest,
 A fragrant wild, with Nature's beauty
 drest,
 And there into delight my soul deceive.
 There warm my breast with patriotic lore,
 Musing on Milton's fate — on Sydney's
 bier —
 Till their stern forms before my mind
 arise:
 Perhaps on wings of Poesy upsoar,
 Full often dropping a delicious tear,
 When some melodious sorrow spells
 mine eyes.

'I STOOD TIPTOE UPON A LITTLE HILL'

'Places of nestling green, for poets made.'

LEIGH HUNT, *The Story of Rimini*.

Leigh Hunt, in *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries*, says that 'this poem was suggested to Keats by a delightful summer's day as he stood beside the gate that leads from the Battery on Hampstead Heath into a field by Caen Wood;' but it is not needful for one to put himself into the same geographical position. It is more to the point to remember that when Keats wrote the lines which here follow he was living in the Vale of Health in Hampstead, happy in the association of Hunt and kindred spirits, and trembling with the consciousness of his own poetic power. He had not yet essayed a long flight, as in *Endymion*; but these lines indeed were written as a prelude to a poem which he was devising, which should narrate the loves of Diana, and it will be seen how, with circling flight, he draws nearer and nearer to his theme; but after all, his song ends with a half agitated and passionate speculation over his own poetic birth. The date of the poem, which is the first after the dedication, in the 1817 volume, was presumably in the summer of 1816, for Keats appears to have written promptly under the stimulus of momentary experience.

I STOOD tiptoe upon a little hill,
The air was cooling, and so very still
That the sweet buds which with a modest
pride

Pull droopingly, in slanting curve aside,
Their scanty-leaved and finely tapering
stems,

Had not yet lost those starry diadems
Caught from the early sobbing of the morn.
The clouds were pure and white as flocks
new shorn,

And fresh from the clear brook; sweetly
they slept

On the blue fields of heaven, and then there
crept

A little noiseless noise among the leaves,
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves:
For not the faintest motion could be seen

Of all the shades that slanted o'er the green.
There was wide wand'ring for the greedy-
est eye

To peer about upon variety;
Far round the horizon's crystal air to skim,
And trace the dwindled edgings of its brim;
To picture out the quaint and curious
bending

Of a fresh woodland alley, never-ending;²⁰
Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,
Guess where the jaunty streams refresh
themselves.

I gazed awhile, and felt as light and free
As though the fanning wings of Mercury
Had played upon my heels: I was light-
hearted,

And many pleasures to my vision started;
So I straightway began to pluck a posey
Of luxuries bright, milky, soft, and rosy.

A bush of May flowers with the bees
about them;

Ah, sure no tasteful nook could be without
them;

And let a lush laburnum oversweep them,³⁰
And let long grass grow round the roots
to keep them

Moist, cool, and green; and shade the vio-
lets,

That they may bind the moss in leafy nets.

A filbert hedge with wild briar over-
twined,

And clumps of woodbine taking the soft
wind

Upon their summer thrones; there too
should be

The frequent chequer of a youngling tree,
That with a score of light green brethren
shoots

From the quaint mossiness of aged roots:⁴⁰
Round which is heard a spring-head of
clear waters

Babbling so wildly of its lovely daughters
The spreading blue-bells: it may haply
mourn

That such fair clusters should be rudely
torn

From their fresh beds, and scattered
thoughtlessly
By infant hands, left on the path to die.

Open afresh your round of starry folds,
Ye ardent marigolds !
Dry up the moisture from your golden lids,
For great Apollo bids 50
That in these days your praises should be
sung

On many harps, which he has lately strung;
And when again your dewiness he kisses,
Tell him, I have you in my world of blisses:
So haply when I rove in some far vale,
His mighty voice may come upon the gale.

Here are sweet peas, on tiptoe for a
flight:
With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate
white,
And taper fingers catching at all things,
To bind them all about with tiny rings. 60

Linger awhile upon some bending planks
That lean against a streamlet's rushy banks,
And watch intently Nature's gentle doings:
They will be found softer than ring-dove's
cooings.

How silent comes the water round that bend;
Not the minutest whisper does it send
To the o'erhanging shallows: blades of grass
Slowly across the chequer'd shadows pass.
Why, you might read two sonnets, ere they
reach

To where the hurrying freshnesses aye
preach 70

A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds;
Where swarms of minnows show their little
heads,

Staying their wavy bodies 'gainst the
streams,

To taste the luxury of sunny beams
Temper'd with coolness. How they ever
wrestle

With their own sweet delight, and ever
nestle

Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand.

If you but scantily hold out the hand,

That very instant not one will remain;
But turn your eye, and they are there again.
The ripples seem right glad to reach those
cresses, 81

And cool themselves among the em'rald
tresses;

The while they cool themselves, they fresh-
ness give,

And moisture, that the bowery green may
live:

So keeping up an interchange of favours,
Like good men in the truth of their be-
haviours.

Sometimes goldfinches one by one will drop
From low-hung branches; little space they
stop;

But sip, and twitter, and their feathers
sleek;

Then off at once, as in a wanton freak: 90
Or perhaps, to show their black, and golden
wings,

Pausing upon their yellow flutterings.

Were I in such a place, I sure should pray
That nought less sweet, might call my
thoughts away,

Than the soft rustle of a maiden's gown

Fanning away the dandelion's down;

Than the light music of her nimble toes

Patting against the sorrel as she goes.

How she would start, and blush, thus to be
caught

Playing in all her innocence of thought. 100

O let me lead her gently o'er the brook,

Watch her half-smiling lips, and downward
look;

O let me for one moment touch her wrist;

Let me one moment to her breathing list;

And as she leaves me, may she often turn

Her fair eyes looking through her locks au-
burne.

What next? A tuft of evening primroses,

O'er which the mind may hover till it dozes;

O'er which it well might take a pleasant
sleep,

But that 't is ever startled by the leap 110

Of buds into ripe flowers; or by the flitting

Of diverse moths, that aye their rest are
quitting;

Or by the moon lifting her silver rim
 Above a cloud, and with a gradual swim
 Coming into the blue with all her light.
 O Maker of sweet poets, dear delight
 Of this fair world, and all its gentle livers;
 Spangler of clouds, halo of crystal rivers,
 Mingler with leaves, and dew and tumbling
 streams,

Closer of lovely eyes to lovely dreams, 120
 Lover of loneliness, and wandering,
 Of upcast eye, and tender pondering !
 Thee must I praise above all other glo-
 ries

That smile us on to tell delightful stories.
 For what has made the sage or poet write
 But the fair paradise of Nature's light ?
 In the calm grandeur of a sober line,
 We see the waving of the mountain pine;
 And when a tale is beautifully staid,
 We feel the safety of a hawthorn glade: 130
 When it is moving on luxurious wings,
 The soul is lost in pleasant smotherings:
 Fair dewy roses brush against our faces,
 And flowering laurels spring from diamond
 vases;

O'erhead we see the jasmine and sweet-
 briar,
 And bloomy grapes laughing from green
 attire;
 While at our feet, the voice of crystal
 bubbles
 Charms us at once away from all our trou-
 bles:

So that we feel uplifted from the world,
 Walking upon the white clouds wreath'd
 and curl'd. 140

So felt he, who first told, how Psyche
 went

On the smooth wind to realms of wonder-
 ment;

What Psyche felt, and Love, when their
 full lips

First touch'd; what amorous and fondling
 nips

They gave each other's cheeks; with all
 their sighs,

And how they kist each other's tremulous
 eyes:

The silver lamp, — the ravishment, — the
 wonder —

The darkness, — loneliness, — the fearful
 thunder;

Their woes gone by, and both to heaven up-
 flown, 149

To bow for gratitude before Jove's throne.
 So did he feel, who pull'd the boughs
 aside,

That we might look into a forest wide,
 To catch a glimpse of Fauns, and Dryades
 Coming with softest rustle through the
 trees;

And garlands woven of flowers wild, and
 sweet,

Upheld on ivory wrists, or sporting feet:
 Telling us how fair, trembling Syrinx fled
 Arcadian Pan, with such a fearful dread.
 Poor Nymph, — poor Pan, — how he did
 weep to find

Nought but a lovely sighing of the wind 160
 Along the reedy stream; a half-heard strain,
 Full of sweet desolation — balmy pain.

What first inspired a bard of old to sing
 Narcissus pining o'er the untainted spring ?
 In some delicious ramble, he had found
 A little space, with boughs all woven round;
 And in the midst of all, a clearer pool
 Than e'er reflected in its pleasant cool,
 The blue sky here, and there, serenely peep-
 ing

Through tendril wreaths fantastically creep-
 ing. 170

And on the bank a lonely flower he spied,
 A meek and forlorn flower, with naught of
 pride,

Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clear-
 ness,

To woo its own sad image into nearness:
 Deaf to light Zephyrus it would not move;
 But still would seem to droop, to pine, to
 love.

So while the Poet stood in this sweet spot,
 Some fainter gleamings o'er his fancy
 shot;

Nor was it long ere he had told the tale
 Of young Narcissus, and sad Echo's bale. 180

Where had he been, from whose warm
 head outflow
 That sweetest of all songs, that ever new,
 That aye refreshing, pure deliciousness,
 Coming ever to bless
 The wanderer by moonlight? to him
 bringing
 Shapes from the invisible world, unearthly
 singing
 From out the middle air, from flowery
 nests,
 And from the pillowy silkiness that rests
 Full in the speculation of the stars. 189
 Ah! surely he had burst our mortal bars;
 Into some wond'rous region he had gone,
 To search for thee, divine Endymion!

He was a Poet, sure a lover too,
 Who stood on Latmus' top, what time
 there blew
 Soft breezes from the myrtle vale below;
 And brought in faintness solemn, sweet,
 and slow
 A hymn from Dian's temple; while up-
 swelling,
 The incense went to her own starry dwell-
 ing.
 But though her face was clear as infant's
 eyes, 199
 Though she stood smiling o'er the sacrifice,
 The Poet wept at her so piteous fate,
 Wept that such beauty should be deso-
 late:
 So in fine wrath some golden sounds he won,
 And gave meek Cynthia her Endymion.

Queen of the wide air; thou most lovely
 queen
 Of all the brightness that mine eyes have
 seen!
 As thou exceedest all things in thy shine,
 So every tale, does this sweet tale of thine.
 O for three words of honey, that I might
 Tell but one wonder of thy bridal night! 210

Where distant ships do seem to show
 their keels,
 Phœbus awhile delay'd his mighty wheels,

And turn'd to smile upon thy bashful eyes,
 Ere he his unseen pomp would solem-
 nize.

The evening weather was so bright, and
 clear,

That men of health were of unusual cheer;
 Stepping like Homer at the trumpet's
 call,

Or young Apollo on the pedestal:

And lovely women were as fair and warm,
 As Venus looking sideways in alarm. 220

The breezes were ethereal, and pure,
 And crept through half closed lattices to
 cure

The languid sick; it cool'd their fever'd
 sleep,

And soothed them into slumbers full and
 deep.

Soon they awoke clear-eyed: nor burnt
 with thirsting,

Nor with hot fingers, nor with temples
 bursting:

And springing up, they met the wond'ring
 sight

Of their dear friends, nigh foolish with
 delight;

Who feel their arms, and breasts, and kiss
 and stare,

And on their placid foreheads part the
 hair. 230

Young men and maidens at each other
 gaz'd,

With hands held back, and motionless,
 amaz'd

To see the brightness in each other's eyes;
 And so they stood, fill'd with a sweet sur-
 prise,

Until their tongues were loos'd in poesy.

Therefore no lover did of anguish die:

But the soft numbers, in that moment
 spoken,

Made silken ties, that never may be broken.
 Cynthia! I cannot tell the greater blisses
 That follow'd thine, and thy dear shep-
 herd's kisses: 240

Was there a Poet born?—But now no
 more,

My wand'ring spirit must no further soar.

SLEEP AND POETRY

The last poem in the 1817 volume. Charles Cowden Clarke relates that 'it was in the library of Hunt's cottage, where an extempore bed had been put up for Keats on the sofa, that he composed the framework and many lines of this poem, the last sixty or seventy being an inventory of the art garniture of the room.' It may be assigned to the summer of 1816.

As I lay in my bed slepe full unmete
Was unto me, but why that I ne might
Rest I ne wist, for there n' as erthly wight
(As I suppose) had more of hertis ese
Than I, for I n' ad sicknesse nor diseese.

CHAUCER.

WHAT is more gentle than a wind in summer ?

What is more soothing than the pretty hummer

That stays one moment in an open flower,
And buzzes cheerily from bower to bower ?

What is more tranquil than a musk-rose blowing

In a green island, far from all men's knowing ?

More healthful than the leafiness of dales ?
More secret than a nest of nightingales ?

More serene than Cordelia's countenance ?
More full of visions than a high romance ?

What, but thee, Sleep ? Soft closer of our eyes !

11

Low murmurer of tender lullabies !

Light hoverer around our happy pillows !

Wreather of poppy buds, and weeping willows !

Silent entangler of a beauty's tresses !

Most happy listener ! when the morning blesses

Thee for enlivening all the cheerful eyes

That glance so brightly at the new sunrise.

But what is higher beyond thought than thee ?

Fresher than berries of a mountain-tree ?

More strange, more beautiful, more smooth,
more regal,

21

Than wings of swans, than doves, than dim-
seen eagle ?

What is it ? And to what shall I compare it ?

It has a glory, and nought else can share it:
The thought thereof is awful, sweet, and holy,

Chasing away all worldliness and folly:

Coming sometimes like fearful claps of thunder,

Or the low rumblings earth's regions under;

And sometimes like a gentle whispering

Of all the secrets of some wond'rous thing
That breathes about us in the vacant air;

So that we look around with prying stare,
Perhaps to see shapes of light, aerial limning;

And catch soft floatings from a faint-heard hymning;

To see the laurel wreath, on high suspended,
That is to crown our name when life is ended.

Sometimes it gives a glory to the voice,

And from the heart up-springs, rejoice ! rejoice !

Sounds which will reach the Framer of all things,

And die away in ardent mutterings.

40

No one who once the glorious sun has seen,

And all the clouds, and felt his bosom clean
For his great Maker's presence, but must know

What 't is I mean, and feel his being glow:
Therefore no insult will I give his spirit,

By telling what he sees from native merit.

O Poesy ! for thee I hold my pen,

That am not yet a glorious denizen

Of thy wide heaven — should I rather kneel
Upon some mountain-top until I feel

50

A growing splendour round about me hung,
And echo back the voice of thine own tongue ?

O Poesy ! for thee I grasp my pen,

That am not yet a glorious denizen

Of thy wide heaven; yet, to my ardent
 prayer,
 Yield from thy sanctuary some clear air,
 Smoothed for intoxication by the breath
 Of flowering bays, that I may die a death
 Of luxury, and my young spirit follow
 The morning sunbeams to the great Apollo
 Like a fresh sacrifice; or, if I can bear 61
 The o'erwhelming sweets, 'twill bring to
 me the fair
 Visions of all places: a bowery nook
 Will be elysium — an eternal book
 Whence I may copy many a lovely saying
 About the leaves, and flowers — about the
 playing
 Of nymphs in woods, and fountains; and
 the shade
 Keeping a silence round a sleeping maid;
 And many a verse from so strange influence
 That we must ever wonder how, and whence
 It came. Also imaginings will hover 71
 Round my fire-side, and haply there dis-
 cover
 Vistas of solemn beauty, where I'd wander
 In happy silence, like the clear Meander
 Through its lone vales; and where I found
 a spot
 Of awfuller shade, or an enchanted grot,
 Or a green hill o'erspread with chequer'd
 dress
 Of flowers, and fearful from its loveliness,
 Write on my tablets all that was permitted,
 All that was for our human senses fitted.
 Then the events of this wide world I'd
 seize 81
 Like a strong giant, and my spirit tease
 Till at its shoulders it should proudly see
 Wings to find out an immortality.

Stop and consider ! life is but a day;
 A fragile dewdrop on its perilous way
 From a tree's summit; a poor Indian's sleep
 While his boat hastens to the monstrous
 steep
 Of Montmorenci. Why so sad a moan ?
 Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown;
 The reading of an ever-changing tale; 91
 The light uplifting of a maiden's veil;

A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air;
 A laughing school-boy, without grief or
 care,
 Riding the springy branches of an elm.

O for ten years, that I may overwhelm
 Myself in poesy; so I may do the deed
 That my own soul has to itself decreed.
 Then I will pass the countries that I see
 In long perspective, and continually 100
 Taste their pure fountains. First the realm
 I'll pass

Of Flora, and old Pan: sleep in the grass,
 Feed upon apples red, and strawberries,
 And choose each pleasure that my fancy
 sees;

Catch the white-handed nymphs in shady
 places,

To woo sweet kisses from averted faces, —
 Play with their fingers, touch their shoul-
 ders white

Into a pretty shrinking with a bite
 As hard as lips can make it: till agreed,
 A lovely tale of human life we'll read. 110
 And one will teach a tame dove how it best
 May fan the cool air gently o'er my rest;
 Another, bending o'er her nimble tread,
 Will set a green robe floating round her
 head,

And still will dance with ever-varied ease,
 Smiling upon the flowers and the trees:
 Another will entice me on, and on
 Through almond blossoms and rich cinna-
 mon;

Till in the bosom of a leafy world
 We rest in silence, like two gems upcurl'd
 In the recesses of a pearly shell. 121

And can I ever bid these joys farewell ?
 Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,
 Where I may find the agonies, the strife
 Of human hearts: for lo ! I see afar,
 O'er-sailing the blue cragginess, a car
 And steeds with streamy manes — the
 charioteer
 Looks out upon the winds with glorious fear:
 And now the numerous tramplings quiver
 lightly

Along a huge cloud's ridge; and now with
 sprightly 130
 Wheel downward come they into fresher
 skies,
 Tipt round with silver from the sun's bright
 eyes.
 Still downward with capacious whirl they
 glide;
 And now I see them on a green-hill's side
 In breezy rest among the nodding stalks.
 The charioteer with wond'rous gesture
 talks
 To the trees and mountains; and there soon
 appear
 Shapes of delight, of mystery, and fear,
 Passing along before a dusky space
 Made by some mighty oaks: as they would
 chase 140
 Some ever-fleeting music, on they sweep.
 Lo! how they murmur, laugh, and smile,
 and weep:
 Some with upholden hand and mouth severe;
 Some with their faces muffled to the ear
 Between their arms; some, clear in youth-
 ful bloom,
 Go glad and smilingly athwart the gloom;
 Some looking back, and some with upward
 gaze;
 Yes, thousands in a thousand different ways
 Flit onward — now a lovely wreath of girls
 Dancing their sleek hair into tangled curls;
 And now broad wings. Most awfully in-
 tent 151
 The driver of those steeds is forward bent,
 And seems to listen: O that I might know
 All that he writes with such a hurrying
 glow.

 The visions all are fled — the car is fled
 Into the light of heaven, and in their stead
 A sense of real things comes doubly strong,
 And, like a muddy stream, would bear
 along
 My soul to nothingness: but I will strive
 Against all doubtings, and will keep alive
 The thought of that same chariot, and the
 strange 161
 Journey it went.

Is there so small a range
 In the present strength of manhood, that
 the high
 Imagination cannot freely fly
 As she was wont of old? prepare her
 steeds,
 Paw up against the light, and do strange
 deeds
 Upon the clouds? Has she not shewn us
 all?
 From the clear space of ether, to the small
 Breath of new buds unfolding? From the
 meaning
 Of Jove's large eyebrow, to the tender
 greening 170
 Of April meadows? here her altar shone,
 E'en in this isle; and who could paragon
 The fervid choir that lifted up a noise
 Of harmony, to where it aye will poise
 Its mighty self of convoluting sound,
 Huge as a planet, and like that roll round,
 Eternally around a dizzy void?
 Ay, in those days the Muses were nigh
 cloy'd
 With honours; nor had any other care
 Than to sing out and soothe their wavy
 hair. 18•

 Could all this be forgotten? Yes, a
 schism
 Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,
 Made great Apollo blush for this his land.
 Men were thought wise who could not un-
 derstand
 His glories: with a puling infant's force
 They sway'd about upon a rocking-horse,
 And thought it Pegasus. Ah, dismal-soul'd!
 The winds of heaven blew, the ocean
 roll'd
 Its gathering waves — ye felt it not. The
 blue
 Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew 190
 Of summer nights collected still to make
 The morning precious: beauty was awake!
 Why were ye not awake? But ye were
 dead
 To things ye knew not of, — were closely
 wed

To musty laws lined out with wretched
rule
And compass vile: so that ye taught a
school
Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and
fit,
Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
Their verses tallied. Easy was the task:
A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
Of Poesy. Ill-fated, impious race! 201
That blasphem'd the bright Lyrist to his
face,
And did not know it, — no, they went about,
Holding a poor, decrepid standard out,
Mark'd with most flimsy mottoes, and in
large
The name of one Boileau!

O ye whose charge

It is to hover round our pleasant hills!
Whose congregated majesty so fills
My boundly reverence, that I cannot trace
Your hallowed names, in this unholy place,
So near those common folk; did not their
shames 211
Affright you? Did our old lamenting
Thames

Delight you? did ye never cluster round
Delicious Avon, with a mournful sound,
And weep? Or did ye wholly bid adieu
To regions where no more the laurel grew?
Or did ye stay to give a welcoming
To some lone spirits who could proudly
sing

Their youth away, and die? 'T was even
so: 219

But let me think away those times of woe:
Now 't is a fairer season; ye have breathed
Rich benedictions o'er us; ye have wreathed
Fresh garlands: for sweet music has been
heard

In many places; — some has been upstirr'd
From out its crystal dwelling in a lake,
By a swan's ebon bill; from a thick brake,
Nested and quiet in a valley mild,
Bubbles a pipe; fine sounds are floating
wild

About the earth: happy are ye and glad.

These things are, doubtless; yet in truth
we've had 230

Strange thunders from the potency of song;
Mingled indeed with what is sweet and
strong

From majesty: but in clear truth the themes
Are ugly clubs, the Poets Polyphemes
Disturbing the grand sea. A drainless
shower

Of light is Poesy; 'tis the supreme of
power;

'T is might half slumb'ring on its own right
arm.

The very archings of her eyelids charm
A thousand willing agents to obey,
And still she governs with the mildest sway:
But strength alone though of the Muses
born 241

Is like a fallen angel: trees upturn,
Darkness, and worms, and shrouds, and
sepulchres

Delight it; for it feeds upon the burrs
And thorns of life; forgetting the great
end

Of Poesy, that it should be a friend
To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts
of man.

Yet I rejoice: a myrtle fairer than 248
E'er grew in Paphos, from the bitter weeds
Lifts its sweet head into the air, and feeds
A silent space with ever sprouting green.
All tenderest birds there find a pleasant
screen,

Creep through the shade with jaunty flut-
tering,

Nibble the little cupped flowers and sing.
Then let us clear away the choking thorns
From round its gentle stem; let the young
fawns,

Yeaned in after-times, when we are flown,
Find a fresh sward beneath it, overgrown
With simple flowers: let there nothing be
More boisterous than a lover's bended knee;
Nought more ungentle than the placid look
Of one who leans upon a closed book; 262
Nought more untranquil than the grassy
slopes

Between two hills. All hail, delightful
hopes !

As she was wont, th' imagination
Into most lovely labyrinths will be gone,
And they shall be accounted poet kings
Who simply tell the most heart-easing
things.

O may these joys be ripe before I die.

Will not some say that I presumptuously
Have spoken ? that from hastening disgrace
'T were better far to hide my foolish face ?
That whining boyhood should with reverence bow
Ere the dread thunderbolt could reach ?
How !

If I do hide myself, it sure shall be
In the very fane, the light of Poesy :
If I do fall, at least I will be laid
Beneath the silence of a poplar shade ;
And over me the grass shall be smooth
shaven ;
And there shall be a kind memorial
graven.

But off, Despondence ! miserable bane !
They should not know thee, who athirst to
gain

A noble end, are thirsty every hour.
What though I am not wealthy in the dower
Of spanning wisdom ; though I do not know
The shiftings of the mighty winds that
blow

Hither and thither all the changing
thoughts

Of man : though no great minist'ring reason
sorts

Out the dark mysteries of human souls
To clear conceiving : yet there ever
rolls

A vast idea before me, and I glean
Therefrom my liberty ; thence too I've
seen

The end and aim of Poesy. 'T is clear
As anything most true ; as that the year
Is made of the four seasons — manifest
As a large cross, some old cathedral's
crest,

Lifted to the white clouds. Therefore
should I

Be but the essence of deformity,
A coward, did my very eyelids wink
At speaking out what I have dared to
think.

Ah ! rather let me like a madman run
Over some precipice ; let the hot sun
Melt my Dædalian wings, and drive me
down

Convuls'd and headlong ! Stay ! an inward
frown

Of conscience bids me be more calm awhile.
An ocean dim, sprinkled with many an
isle,

Spreads awfully before me. How much
toil !

How many days ! what desperate turmoil !
Ere I can have explored its widenesses.

Ah, what a task ! upon my bended
knees,

I could unsay those — no, impossible !
Impossible !

For sweet relief I'll dwell
On humbler thoughts, and let this strange
essay

Begun in gentleness die so away.
E'en now all tumult from my bosom fades :
I turn full-hearted to the friendly aids
That smooth the path of honour ; brother-
hood,

And friendliness the nurse of mutual good.
The hearty grasp that sends a pleasant
sonnet

Into the brain ere one can think upon it ;
The silence when some rhymes are coming
out ;

And when they're come, the very pleasant
rout :

The message certain to be done to-morrow.
'T is perhaps as well that it should be to
borrow

Some precious book from out its snug
retreat,

To cluster round it when we next shall
meet.

Scarce can I scribble on ; for lovely airs

Are fluttering round the room like doves in
pairs ;

Many delights of that glad day recalling,
When first my senses caught their tender
falling. 330

And with these airs come forms of elegance
Stooping their shoulders o'er a horse's
prance,

Careless, and grand — fingers soft and
round

Parting luxuriant curls ; — and the swift
bound

Of Bacchus from his chariot, when his eye
Made Ariadne's cheek look blushing.

Thus I remember all the pleasant flow
Of words at opening a portfolio.

Things such as these are ever harbingers
To trains of peaceful images : the stir 340
Of a swan's neck unseen among the rushes :

A linnet starting all about the bushes :

A butterfly, with golden wings broad
parted,

Nestling a rose, convuls'd as though it
smarted

With over pleasure — many, many more,

Might I indulge at large in all my store

Of luxuries : yet I must not forget

Sleep, quiet with his poppy coronet :

For what there may be worthy in these

rhymes
I partly owe to him : and thus, the
chimes 350

Of friendly voices had just given place

To as sweet a silence, when I 'gan retrace

The pleasant day, upon a couch at ease.

It was a poet's house who keeps the keys

Of pleasure's temple. Round about were
hung

The glorious features of the bards who
sung

In other ages — cold and sacred busts

Smiled at each other. Happy he who trusts

To clear Futurity his darling fame !

Then there were fauns and satyrs taking
aim 360

At swelling apples with a frisky leap

And reaching fingers, 'mid a luscious heap

Of vine leaves. Then there rose to view a
fane

Of liny marble, and thereto a train

Of nymphs approaching fairly o'er the
sward :

One, loveliest, holding her white hand
toward

The dazzling sunrise : two sisters sweet

Bending their graceful figures till they meet

Over the trippings of a little child :

And some are hearing, eagerly, the wild 370

Thrilling liquidity of dewy piping.

See, in another picture, nymphs are wiping

Cherishingly Diana's timorous limbs ; —

A fold of lawny mantle dabbling swims

At the bath's edge, and keeps a gentle
motion

With the subsiding crystal : as when ocean
Heaves calmly its broad swelling smooth-
iness o'er

Its rocky marge, and balances once more

The patient weeds ; that now unshent by
foam

Feel all about their undulating home. 380

Sappho's meek head was there half smiling
down

At nothing ; just as though the earnest
frown

Of over-thinking had that moment gone

From off her brow, and left her all alone.

Great Alfred's too, with anxious, pitying
eyes,

As if he always listened to the sighs

Of the goaded world ; and Kosciusko's,
worn

By horrid suffrance — mightily forlorn.

Petrarch, outstepping from the shady
green,

Starts at the sight of Laura ; nor can
wean 390

His eyes from her sweet face. Most happy
they !

For over them was seen a free display

Of outspread wings, and from between them
shone

The face of Poesy : from off her throne
She overlook'd things that I scarce could
tell.

The very sense of where I was might well
Keep Sleep aloof : but more than that there
came

Thought after thought to nourish up the
flame

Within my breast ; so that the morning
light

Surprised me even from a sleepless
night ; 400

And up I rose refresh'd, and glad, and gay,
Resolving to begin that very day

These lines ; and howsoever they be done,
I leave them as a father does his son.

EPISTLE TO MY BROTHER GEORGE

Written according to George Keats at Mar-
gate, August, 1816, and included in the 1817
volume.

FULL many a dreary hour have I past,
My brain bewilder'd, and my mind o'ercast
With heaviness ; in seasons when I've
thought

No sphere strains by me could e'er be
caught

From the blue dome, though I to dimness
gaze

On the far depth where sheeted lightning
plays ;

Or, on the wavy grass outstretch'd supinely,
Pry 'mong the stars, to strive to think di-
vinely :

That I should never hear Apollo's song,
Though feathery clouds were floating all
along 10

The purple west, and, two bright streaks
between,

The golden lyre itself were dimly seen:
That the still murmur of the honey bee
Would never teach a rural song to me:
That the bright glance from beauty's eye-
lids slanting

Would never make a lay of mine enchanting,

Or warm my breast with ardour to unfold
Some tale of love and arms in time of old.

But there are times, when those that love
the bay,

Fly from all sorrowing far, far away ; 20
A sudden glow comes on them, nought
they see

In water, earth, or air, but poesy.
It has been said, dear George, and true I
hold it,

(For knightly Spenser to Libertas told it,) 30
That when a Poet is in such a trance,
In air he sees white coursers paw and
prance,

Bestriden of gay knights, in gay apparel,
Who at each other tilt in playful quarrel ;
And what we, ignorantly, sheet-lightning
call,

Is the swift opening of their wide portal, 30
When the bright warder blows his trumpet
clear,

Whose tones reach nought on earth but
Poet's ear.

When these enchanted portals open wide,
And through the light the horsemen swiftly
glide,

The Poet's eye can reach those golden halls,
And view the glory of their festivals:
Their ladies fair, that in the distance seem
Fit for the silv'ring of a seraph's dream ;
Their rich brimm'd goblets, that incessant
run

Like the bright spots that move about the
sun ; 40

And, when upheld, the wine from each
bright jar

Pours with the lustre of a falling star.
Yet further off are dimly seen their bowers,
Of which no mortal eye can reach the flow-
ers ;

And 't is right just, for well Apollo knows
'T would make the Poet quarrel with the
rose.

All that's reveal'd from that far seat of
blisses,

Is, the clear fountains' interchanging kisses,
As gracefully descending, light and thin,

Like silver streaks across a dolphin's fin, 50
When he upswimmeth from the coral caves,
And sports with half his tail above the
waves.

These wonders strange he sees, and many
more,

Whose head is pregnant with poetic lore.
Should he upon an evening ramble fare
With forehead to the soothing breezes bare,
Would he naught see but the dark, silent
blue,

With all its diamonds trembling through
and through ?

Or the coy moon, when in the waviness 59
Of whitest clouds she does her beauty dress,
And staidly paces higher up, and higher,
Like a sweet nun in holiday attire ?

Ah, yes ! much more would start into his
sight —

The revelries, and mysteries of night:
And should I ever see them, I will tell you
Such tales as needs must with amazement
spell you.

These are the living pleasures of the
bard:

But richer far posterity's award.
What does he murmur with his latest breath,
While his proud eye looks through the film
of death ? 70

What though I leave this dull and earthly
mould,

Yet shall my spirit lofty converse hold
With after times. — The patriot shall feel
My stern alarum, and unsheath his steel;
Or in the senate thunder out my numbers,
To startle princes from their easy slumbers.
The sage will mingle with each moral theme
My happy thoughts sententious; he will
teem

With lofty periods when my verses fire
him,

And then I'll stoop from heaven to inspire
him. 80

Lays have I left of such a dear delight
That maids will sing them on their bridal
night.

Gay villagers, upon a morn of May,
When they have tired their gentle limbs
with play,

And form'd a snowy circle on the grass,
And plac'd in midst of all that lovely lass
Who chosen is their queen, — with her fine
head

Crown'd with flowers purple, white, and
red:

For there the lily, and the musk-rose, sigh-
ing, 89

Are emblems true of hapless lovers dying:
Between her breasts, that never yet felt
trouble,

A bunch of violets full blown, and double,
Serenely sleep: — she from a casket takes
A little book, — and then a joy awakes
About each youthful heart, — with stifled
cries,

And rubbing of white hands, and sparkling
eyes:

For she's to read a tale of hopes and fears;
One that I foster'd in my youthful years:
The pearls, that on each glist'ning circlet
sleep,

Gush ever and anon with silent creep, 100
Lured by the innocent dimples. To sweet
rest

Shall the dear babe, upon its mother's
breast,

Be lull'd with songs of mine. Fair world,
adieu !

Thy dales and hills are fading from my
view:

Swiftly I mount, upon wide-spreading
pinions,

Far from the narrow bounds of thy do-
minions.

Full joy I feel, while thus I cleave the air,
That my soft verse will charm thy daugh-
ters fair,

And warm thy sons !' Ah, my dear friend
and brother, 109

Could I, at once, my mad ambition smother,
For tasting joys like these, sure I should be
Happier, and dearer to society.

At times, 't is true, I've felt relief from
pain

When some bright thought has darted
 through my brain:
 Through all that day I've felt a greater
 pleasure
 Than if I'd brought to light a hidden trea-
 sure.
 As to my sonnets, though none else should
 heed them,
 I feel delighted, still, that you should read
 them.
 Of late, too, I have had much calm enjoy-
 ment,
 Stretch'd on the grass at my best lov'd em-
 ployment 120
 Of scribbling lines for you. These things
 I thought
 While, in my face, the freshest breeze I
 caught.
 E'en now I'm pillow'd on a bed of flowers
 That crowns a lofty cliff, which proudly
 towers
 Above the ocean waves. The stalks and
 blades
 Chequer my tablet with their quivering
 shades.
 On one side is a field of drooping oats,
 Through which the poppies show their
 scarlet coats; 128
 So pert and useless, that they bring to mind
 The scarlet coats that pester human-kind.
 And on the other side, outspread, is seen
 Ocean's blue mantle, streak'd with purple,
 and green;
 Now 'tis I see a canvass'd ship, and now
 Mark the bright silver curling round her
 prow.
 I see the lark down-dropping to his nest,
 And the broad-winged sea-gull never at rest;
 For when no more he spreads his feathers
 free,
 His breast is dancing on the restless sea.
 Now I direct my eyes into the west,
 Which at this moment is in sunbeams
 drest: 140
 Why westward turn? 'Twas but to say
 adieu!
 'Twas but to kiss my hand, dear George,
 to you!

TO MY BROTHER GEORGE

The first in the group of sonnets in the 1817 volume. A transcript by George Keats bears the date 'Margate, August, 1816.'

MANY the wonders I this day have seen:
 The sun, when first he kist away the tears
 That fill'd the eyes of morn; — the lau-
 rell'd peers
 Who from the feathery gold of evening
 lean; —
 The ocean with its vastness, its blue green,
 Its ships, its rocks, its caves, its hopes,
 its fears, —
 Its voice mysterious, which whoso hears
 Must think on what will be, and what has
 been.
 E'en now, dear George, while this for you I
 write,
 Cynthia is from her silken curtains peep-
 ing
 So scantily, that it seems her bridal night,
 And she her half-discover'd revels keep-
 ing.
 But what, without the social thought of
 thee,
 Would be the wonders of the sky and sea?

TO —

There is no clue to the identity of the per-
 son addressed and no date is affixed. It was
 published in the 1817 volume, and there follows
 the one addressed to his brother George.

HAD I a man's fair form, then might my
 sighs
 Be echoed swiftly through that ivory
 shell
 Thine ear, and find thy gentle heart; so
 well
 Would passion arm me for the enterprise:
 But ah! I am no knight whose foeman dies;
 No cuirass glistens on my bosom's swell;
 I am no happy shepherd of the dell
 Whose lips have trembled with a maiden's
 eyes.

Yet must I dote upon thee,—call thee
sweet,
Sweeter by far than Hybla's honied roses
When steep'd in dew rich to intoxication.
Ah! I will taste that dew, for me't is meet,
And when the moon her pallid face discloses,
I'll gather some by spells, and incantation.

SPECIMEN OF AN INDUCTION TO A POEM

This poem was published in the 1817 volume where it immediately precedes *Calidore*. Leigh Hunt, when reviewing the volume on its appearance, speaks of the two poems as connected, and in Tom Keats's copybook they are written continuously. The same copy contains a memorandum 'marked by Leigh Hunt—1816.'

Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry;
For large white plumes are dancing in mine eye.

Not like the formal crest of latter days:
But bending in a thousand graceful ways;
So graceful, that it seems no mortal hand,
Or e'en the touch of Archimago's wand,
Could charm them into such an attitude.
We must think rather, that in playful mood,
Some mountain breeze had turned its chief delight,

To show this wonder of its gentle might. 10
Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry;
For while I muse, the lance points slantingly

Athwart the morning air; some lady sweet,
Who cannot feel for cold her tender feet,
From the worn top of some old battlement
Hails it with tears, her stout defender sent:
And from her own pure self no joy dissemb-
ling,

Wraps round her ample robe with happy trembling.

Sometimes, when the good Knight his rest would take,

It is reflected, clearly, in a lake,

With the young ashen boughs, 'gainst which it rests,
And th' half-seen mossiness of linnets' nests.

Ah! shall I ever tell its cruelty,
When the fire flashes from a warrior's eye,
And his tremendous hand is grasping it,
And his dark brow for very wrath is knit?
Or when his spirit, with more calm intent,
Leaps to the honours of a tournament,
And makes the gazers round about the ring

Stare at the grandeur of the balancing? 30
No, no! this is far off:—then how shall I
Revive the dying tones of minstrelsy,
Which linger yet about long gothic arches,
In dark green ivy, and among wild larches?
How sing the splendour of the revelries,
When butts of wine are drunk off to the lees?

And that bright lance, against the fretted wall,

Beneath the shade of stately banneral,
Is slung with shining cuirass, sword, and shield?

Where ye may see a spur in bloody field. 40
Light-footed damsels move with gentle paces

Round the wide hall, and show their happy faces;

Or stand in courtly talk by fives and sevens:
Like those fair stars that twinkle in the heavens.

Yet must I tell a tale of chivalry:
Or wherefore comes that knight so proudly by?

Wherefore more proudly does the gentle knight,
Rein in the swelling of his ample might?

Spenser! thy brows are archèd, open, kind,
And come like a clear sunrise to my mind; 50

And always does my heart with pleasure dance,

When I think on thy noble countenance:
Where never yet was ought more earthly seen

Than the pure freshness of thy laurels
green.

Therefore, great bard, I not so fearfully
Call on thy gentle spirit to hover nigh
My daring steps: or if thy tender care,
Thus startled unaware,
Be jealous that the foot of other wight
Should madly follow that bright path of
light

Trac'd by thy lov'd Libertas; he will
speak,

And tell thee that my prayer is very meek;
That I will follow with due reverence,
And start with awe at mine own strange
pretence.

Him thou wilt hear; so I will rest in hope
To see wide plains, fair trees, and lawny
slope:

The morn, the eve, the light, the shade, the
flowers;

Clear streams, smooth lakes, and overlook-
ing towers.

CALIDORE

A FRAGMENT

YOUNG Calidore is paddling o'er the lake;
His healthful spirit eager and awake
To feel the beauty of a silent eve,
Which seem'd full loth this happy world to
leave;

The light dwelt o'er the scene so linger-
ingly.

He bares his forehead to the cool blue sky,
And smiles at the far clearness all around,
Until his heart is well nigh over wound,
And turns for calmness to the pleasant
green

Of easy slopes, and shadowy trees that
lean

So elegantly o'er the waters' brim
And show their blossoms trim.

Scarcely can his clear and nimble eyesight
follow

The freaks and dartings of the black-wing'd
swallow,

Delighting much, to see it half at rest,

Dip so refreshingly its wings, and breast
'Gainst the smooth surface, and to mark
anon,

The widening circles into nothing gone.

And now the sharp keel of his little boat
Comes up with ripple, and with easy
float,

And glides into a bed of water-lilies:
Broad-leav'd are they, and their white can-
opies

Are upward turn'd to catch the heavens'
dew.

Near to a little island's point they grew;
Whence Calidore might have the goodliest
view

Of this sweet spot of earth. The bowery
shore

Went off in gentle windings to the hoar
And light blue mountains: but no breath-
ing man

With a warm heart, and eye prepared to scan
Nature's clear beauty, could pass lightly
by

Objects that look'd out so invitingly
On either side. These, gentle Calidore
Greeted, as he had known them long before.

The sidelong view of swelling leafiness,
Which the glad setting sun in gold doth
dress;

Whence, ever and anon, the jay outsprings,
And scales upon the beauty of its wings.

The lonely turret, shatter'd, and outworn,
Stands venerably proud; too proud to
mourn

Its long lost grandeur: fir-trees grow
around,

Aye dropping their hard fruit upon the
ground.

The little chapel, with the cross above,
Upholding wreaths of ivy; the white dove,
That on the windows spreads his feathers
light,
And seems from purple clouds to wing its
flight.

Green tufted islands casting their soft
shades

Across the lake; sequester'd leafy glades,
That through the dimness of their twilight
show

Large dock-leaves, spiral foxgloves, or the
glow

Of the wild cat's-eyes, or the silvery stems
Of delicate birch-trees, or long grass which
hems 51

A little brook. The youth had long been
viewing

These pleasant things, and heaven was
bedewing

The mountain flowers, when his glad senses
caught

A trumpet's silver voice. Ah! it was
fraught

With many joys for him: the warder's ken
Had found white coursers prancing in the
glen:

Friends very dear to him he soon will see;
So pushes off his boat most eagerly,
And soon upon the lake he skims along, 60
Deaf to the nightingale's first under-song;
Nor minds he the white swans that dream
so sweetly:

His spirit flies before him so completely.

And now he turns a jutting point of land,
Whence may be seen the castle gloomy, and
grand:

Nor will a bee buzz round two swelling
peaches,

Before the point of his light shallop reaches
Those marble steps that through the water
dip:

Now over them he goes with hasty trip,
And scarcely stays to ope the folding
doors: 70

Anon he leaps along the oaken floors
Of halls and corridors.

Delicious sounds! those little bright-eyed
things

That float about the air on azure wings,
Had been less heartfelt by him than the
clang

Of clattering hoofs; into the court he
sprang,

Just as two noble steeds, and palfreys twain,
Were slanting out their necks with loosen'd
rein;

While from beneath the threat'ning port-
cullis

They brought their happy burthens. What
a kiss, 80

What gentle squeeze he gave each lady's
hand!

How tremblingly their delicate ankles
spann'd!

Into how sweet a trance his soul was gone,
While whisperings of affection

Made him delay to let their tender feet
Come to the earth; with an incline so sweet

From their low palfreys o'er his neck they
bent:

And whether there were tears of languish-
ment,

Or that the evening dew had pearl'd their
tresses,

He feels a moisture on his cheek, and
blesses 90

With lips that tremble, and with glistening
eye,

All the soft luxury

That nestled in his arms. A dimpled hand,
Fair as some wonder out of fairy land,

Hung from his shoulder like the drooping
flowers

Of whitest Cassia, fresh from summer
showers:

And this he fondled with his happy cheek,
As if for joy he would no further seek;

When the kind voice of good Sir Clerimond
Came to his ear, like something from be-
yond 100

His present being: so he gently drew

His warm arms, thrilling now with pulses
new,

From their sweet thrall, and forward gently
bending,

Thank'd Heaven that his joy was never
ending;

While 'gainst his forehead he devoutly
press'd

A hand Heaven made to succour the distress'd;
 A hand that from the world's bleak promontory
 Had lifted Calidore for deeds of glory.

Amid the pages, and the torches' glare,
 There stood a knight, patting the flowing hair 110

Of his proud horse's mane: he was withal
 A man of elegance, and stature tall:
 So that the waving of his plumes would be
 High as the berries of a wild ash-tree,
 Or as the winged cap of Mercury.
 His armour was so dexterously wrought
 In shape, that sure no living man had
 thought

It hard, and heavy steel: but that indeed
 It was some glorious form, some splendid weed,

In which a spirit new come from the skies 120

Might live, and show itself to human eyes.
 'Tis the far-fam'd, the brave Sir Gondibert,

Said the good man to Calidore alert;
 While the young warrior with a step of grace

Came up, — a courtly smile upon his face,
 And mailed hand held out, ready to greet
 The large-eyed wonder, and ambitious heat
 Of the aspiring boy; who as he led
 Those smiling ladies, often turned his head
 To admire the visor arch'd so gracefully 130
 Over a knightly brow; while they went by
 The lamps that from the high-roof'd hall
 were pendent,

And gave the steel a shining quite transcendent.

Soon in a pleasant chamber they are seated;

The sweet-lipp'd ladies have already greeted

All the green leaves that round the window clamber,

To show their purple stars, and bells of amber.

Sir Gondibert has doff'd his shining steel,
 Gladdening in the free, and airy feel
 Of a light mantle; and while Clerimond 140
 Is looking round about him with a fond
 And placid eye, young Calidore is burning
 To hear of knightly deeds, and gallant
 spurning

Of all unworthiness; and how the strong of arm

Kept off dismay, and terror, and alarm
 From lovely woman: while brimful of this,
 He gave each damsel's hand so warm a kiss,
 And had such manly ardour in his eye,
 That each at other look'd half-staringly;
 And then their features started into
 smiles, 150
 Sweet as blue heavens o'er enchanted isles.

Softly the breezes from the forest came,
 Softly they blew aside the taper's flame;
 Clear was the song from Philomel's far
 bower;

Grateful the incense from the lime-tree
 flower;

Mysterious, wild, the far heard trumpet's
 tone;

Lovely the moon in ether, all alone:
 Sweet too the converse of these happy mortals,

As that of busy spirits when the portals
 Are closing in the west; or that soft humming 160

We hear around when Hesperus is coming.
 Sweet be their sleep. . . .

EPISTLE TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE

This epistle printed in the 1817 volume is there dated September, 1816, when Clarke was in his twenty-ninth year. He was by eight years Keats's senior, and he lived till his ninetieth year.

OFt have you seen a swan superbly frowning,

And with proud breast his own white shadow crowning;

He slants his neck beneath the waters
 bright
 So silently, it seems a beam of light
 Come from the galaxy: anon he sports, —
 With outspread wings the Naiad Zephyr
 courts,
 Or ruffles all the surface of the lake
 In striving from its crystal face to take
 Some diamond water-drops, and them to
 treasure
 In milky nest, and sip them off at lei-
 sure. 10
 But not a moment can he there insure them,
 Nor to such downy rest can he allure them;
 For down they rush as though they would
 be free,
 And drop like hours into eternity.
 Just like that bird am I in loss of time,
 Whene'er I venture on the stream of rhyme;
 With shatter'd boat, oar snapt, and canvas
 rent,
 I slowly sail, scarce knowing my intent;
 Still scooping up the water with my fingers,
 In which a trembling diamond never
 lingers. 20

By this, friend Charles, you may full
 plainly see
 Why I have never penn'd a line to thee:
 Because my thoughts were never free, and
 clear,
 And little fit to please a classic ear;
 Because my wine was of too poor a savour
 For one whose palate gladdens in the fla-
 vour
 Of sparkling Helicon: — small good it were
 To take him to a desert rude, and bare,
 Who had on Baiæ's shore reclin'd at ease,
 While Tasso's page was floating in a
 breeze 30
 That gave soft music from Armida's
 bowers,
 Mingled with fragrance from her rarest
 flowers:
 Small good to one who had by Mulla's
 stream
 Fondled the maidens with the breasts of
 cream;

Who had beheld Belphebe in a brook,
 And lovely Una in a leafy nook,
 And Archimago leaning o'er his book:
 Who had of all that's sweet tasted, and
 seen,
 From silv'ry ripple, up to beauty's queen;
 From the sequester'd haunts of gay Tita-
 nia, 40
 To the blue dwelling of divine Urania:
 One, who of late had ta'en sweet forest
 walks
 With him who elegantly chats and talks —
 The wrong'd Libertas, — who has told you
 stories
 Of laurel chaplets, and Apollo's glories;
 Of troops chivalrous prancing through a
 city,
 And tearful ladies made for love, and pity:
 With many else which I have never known.
 Thus have I thought; and days on days
 have flown
 Slowly, or rapidly — unwilling still 50
 For you to try my dull, unlearned quill.
 Nor should I now, but that I've known you
 long;
 That you first taught me all the sweets of
 song:
 The grand, the sweet, the terse, the free,
 the fine:
 What swell'd with pathos, and what right
 divine:
 Spenserian vowels that elope with ease,
 And float along like birds o'er summer
 seas:
 Miltonian storms, and more, Miltonian ten-
 derness:
 Michael in arms, and more, meek Eve's fair
 slenderness.
 Who read for me the sonnet swelling
 loudly 60
 Up to its climax, and then dying proudly?
 Who found for me the grandeur of the
 ode,
 Growing, like Atlas, stronger from its load?
 Who let me taste that more than cordial
 dram,
 The sharp, the rapier-pointed epigram?
 Show'd me that epic was of all the king,

Round, vast, and spanning all, like Saturn's
ring ?
You too upheld the veil from Clio's beauty,
And pointed out the patriot's stern duty;
The might of Alfred, and the shaft of
Tell; 70
The hand of Brutus, that so grandly fell
Upon a tyrant's head. Ah! had I never
seen,
Or known your kindness, what might I
have been ?
What my enjoyments in my youthful years,
Bereft of all that now my life endears ?
And can I e'er these benefits forget ?
And can I e'er repay the friendly debt ?
No, doubly no;—yet should these rhym-
ings please,
I shall roll on the grass with twofold ease;
For I have long time been my fancy feed-
ing 80
With hopes that you would one day think
the reading
Of my rough verses not an hour misspent;
Should it e'er be so, what a rich content !
Some weeks have pass'd since last I saw
the spires
In lucent Thames reflected:—warm de-
sires
To see the sun o'er-peep the eastern dim-
ness
And morning shadows streaking into slim-
ness,
Across the lawny fields, and pebbly water;
To mark the time as they grow broad, and
shorter;
To feel the air that plays about the hills, 90
And sips its freshness from the little rills;
To see high, golden corn wave in the light
When Cynthia smiles upon a summer's
night,
And peers among the cloudlet's jet and
white,
As though she were reclining in a bed
Of bean blossoms, in heaven freshly shed.
No sooner had I stepp'd into these plea-
sures,
Than I began to think of rhymes and mea-
sures;

The air that floated by me seem'd to say
'Write! thou wilt never have a better
day.' 100
And so I did. When many lines I'd
written,
Though with their grace I was not over-
smitten,
Yet, as my hand was warm, I thought I'd
better
Trust to my feelings, and write you a letter.
Such an attempt required an inspiration
Of a peculiar sort,—a consummation;—
Which, had I felt, these scribblings might
have been
Verses from which the soul would never
wean;
But many days have past since last my
heart 109
Was warm'd luxuriously by divine Mozart;
By Arne delighted, or by Handel mad-
den'd;
Or by the song of Erin pierc'd and sad-
den'd:
What time you were before the music
sitting,
And the rich notes to each sensation fitting.
Since I have walk'd with you through shady
lanes
That freshly terminate in open plains,
And revell'd in a chat that ceased not
When at night-fall among your books we
got:
No, nor when supper came, nor after that,—
Nor when reluctantly I took my hat; 120
No, nor till cordially you shook my hand
Mid-way between our homes:—your ac-
cents bland
Still sounded in my ears, when I no more
Could hear your footsteps touch the gravly
floor.
Sometimes I lost them, and then found
again;
You changed the foot-path for the grassy
plain.
In those still moments I have wish'd you
joys
That well you know to honour:—'Life's
very toys

With him,' said I, 'will take a pleasant charm;
It cannot be that ought will work him harm.'
These thoughts now come o'er me with all thoughts: —
Again I shake your hand, — friend Charles, good night.

TO MY BROTHERS

Though the poem is thus headed in the 1817 volume, where it is dated November 18, 1816, it might as properly have the heading given it in Tom Keats's copybook: 'Written to his Brother Tom on his Birthday,' with the same date.

SMALL, busy flames play through the fresh-laid coals,
And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep
Like whispers of the household gods that keep
A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.
And while, for rhymes, I search around the poles,
Your eyes are fix'd, as in poetic sleep,
Upon the lore so voluble and deep,
That aye at fall of night our care condoles.
This is your birth-day, Tom, and I rejoice
That thus it passes smoothly, quietly:
Many such eyes of gently whisp'ring noise
May we together pass, and calmly try
What are this world's true joys, — ere the great Voice,
From its fair face, shall bid our spirits fly.

ADDRESSED TO BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON

The first of these two sonnets was sent by Keats with this brief note: 'November 20, 1816. My dear Sir — Last evening wrought me up, and I cannot forbear sending you the following.' In his prompt acknowledgment Haydon suggested the omission of the last four words in the penultimate line, and proposed sending the sonnet to Wordsworth.

Keats replied on the same day as his first note: 'Your letter has filled me with a proud pleasure, and shall be kept by me as a stimulus to exertion — I begin to fix my eye upon one horizon. My feelings entirely fall in with yours in regard to the Ellipsis, and I glory in it. The Idea of your sending it to Wordsworth put me out of breath. You know with what Reverence I would send my Well-wishes to him.' The presentation copy of the 1817 volume bears the inscription 'To W. Wordsworth with the Author's sincere Reverence.' Both sonnets were printed, but in the reverse order in the 1817 volume, and the ellipsis was preserved.

I

GREAT spirits now on earth are sojourning;
He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,
Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,
Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing:
He of the rose, the violet, the spring,
The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake:
And lo! — whose steadfastness would never take
A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering.
And other spirits there are standing apart
Upon the forehead of the age to come;
These, these will give the world another heart,
And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum
Of mighty workings in the human mart?
Listen awhile ye nations, and be dumb.

II

HIGHMINDEDNESS, a jealousy for good,
A loving-kindness for the great man's fame,
Dwells here and there with people of no name,
In noisome alley, and in pathless wood:
And where we think the truth least understood,
Oft may be found a 'singleness of aim,'
That ought to frighten into hooded shame
A money-mong'ring, pitiable brood.
How glorious this affection for the cause
Of steadfast genius, toiling gallantly!

What when a stout unbending champion
awes

Envy, and Malice to their native sty?
Unnumber'd souls breathe out a still ap-
plause,
Proud to behold him in his country's eye.

TO KOSCIUSKO

First published in *The Examiner*, where it
is dated 'Dec., 1816.' It is included in the
1817 volume.

GOOD Kosciusko, thy great name alone
Is a full harvest whence to reap high
feeling;

It comes upon us like the glorious pealing
Of the wide spheres — an everlasting tone.
And now it tells me, that in worlds unknown,
The names of heroes, burst from clouds
concealing,

Are changed to harmonies, for ever
stealing
Through cloudless blue, and round each
silver throne.

It tells me too, that on a happy day,
When some good spirit walks upon the
earth,

Thy name with Alfred's, and the great
of yore,

Gently commingling, gives tremendous
birth

To a loud hymn, that sounds far, far away
To where the great God lives for ever-
more.

TO G. A. W.

Georgiana Augusta Wylie, who afterward
married George Keats. For other verses ad-
dressed to this lady see pp. 11, 240, 243.

This sonnet in Tom Keats's copybook is
dated December, 1816; it was published in the
1817 volume.

NYPH of the downward smile and side-
long glance,

In what diviner moments of the day
Art thou most lovely? When gone far
astray

Into the labyrinths of sweet utterance?
Or when serenely wand'ring in a trance
Of sober thought? Or when starting
away,

With careless robe, to meet the morning
ray,

Thou spar'st the flowers in thy mazy dance?
Haply 't is when thy ruby lips part sweetly,
And so remain, because thou listenest:

But thou to please wert nurtured so com-
pletely

That I can never tell what mood is best.
I shall as soon pronounce which Grace more
neatly

Trips it before Apollo than the rest.

STANZAS

There is no date given to this poem by Lord
Houghton, who published it in the 1848 edi-
tion, and no reference occurs to it in the *Letters*.
It was probably an early careless poem, very
likely a set of album verses.

In a drear-nighted December,

Too happy, happy tree,

Thy branches ne'er remember

Their green felicity:

The north cannot undo them,

With a sleety whistle through them;

Nor frozen thawings glue them

From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December,

Too happy, happy brook,

Thy bubblings ne'er remember

Apollo's summer look;

But with a sweet forgetting,

They stay their crystal fretting,

Never, never petting

About the frozen time.

Ah! would 't were so with many

A gentle girl and boy!

But were there ever any

Writh'd not at passèd joy?

To know the change and feel it,

When there is none to heal it,

Nor numbèd sense to steal it,
Was never said in rhyme.

WRITTEN IN DISGUST OF VULGAR SUPERSTITION

In Tom Keats's copybook this sonnet is dated 'Sunday evening, Dec. 24, 1816.' Lord Houghton gives it in the Aldine edition, and heads it 'Written on a Summer Evening.' Possibly the seventh line may be adduced as evidence of the wintry season.

THE church bells toll a melancholy round,
Calling the people to some other prayers,
Some other gloominess, more dreadful
cares,

More hearkening to the sermon's horrid
sound.

Surely the mind of man is closely bound
In some black spell; seeing that each one
tears

Himself from fireside joys, and Lydian
airs,

And converse high of those with glory
crown'd.

Still, still they toll, and I should feel a
damp,—

A chill as from a tomb, did I not know
That they are dying like an outburnt lamp;
That 'tis their sighing, wailing ere they
go

Into oblivion;—that fresh flowers will
grow,

And many glories of immortal stamp.

SONNET

Published in the 1817 volume, but there is no evidence as to its exact date. It is the latest in order of the sonnets, immediately preceding *Sleep and Poetry*.

HAPPY is England! I could be content
To see no other verdure than its own;
To feel no other breezes than are blown
Through its tall woods with high romances
blent:

Yet do I sometimes feel a languishment
For skies Italian, and an inward groan
To sit upon an Alp as on a throne,
And half forget what world or worldling
meant.

Happy is England, sweet her artless daughters;
Enough their simple loveliness for me,
Enough their whitest arms in silence
clinging:

Yet do I often warmly burn to see
Beauties of deeper glance, and hear
their singing,

And float with them about the summer
waters.

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

Written December 30, 1816, on a challenge from Leigh Hunt, who printed both his and Keats's sonnets in his paper, *The Examiner*. Keats included the sonnet in his 1817 volume.

THE poetry of earth is never dead:

When all the birds are faint with the
hot sun,

And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown
mead;

That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the
lead

In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights; for when tired out
with fun,

He rests at ease beneath some pleasant
weed.

The poetry of earth is ceasing never:

On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove
there shrills

The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing
ever,

And seems to one, in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy
hills.

SONNET

Printed in *The Examiner*, February 23, 1817, and dated by Lord Houghton, when reprinting it, 'January, 1817.'

AFTER dark vapours have oppress'd our plains
For a long dreary season, comes a day
Born of the gentle South, and clears
away

From the sick heavens all unseemly stains.
The anxious month, relieved its pains,
Takes as a long-lost right the feel of
May;

The eyelids with the passing coolness
play,
Like rose leaves with the drip of summer
rains.

And calmest thoughts come round us; as,
of leaves

Budding, — fruit ripening in stillness, —
Autumn suns

Smiling at eve upon the quiet sheaves, —
Sweet Sappho's cheek, — a sleeping infant's
breath, —

The gradual sand that through an hour-
glass runs, —

A woodland rivulet, — a Poet's death.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK
SPACE. AT THE END OF
CHAUCER'S TALE OF 'THE
FLOURE AND THE LEFE'

Written in February, 1817, and published in
The Examiner, March 16, 1817. There is a
pleasant story that Charles Cowden Clarke had
fallen asleep over the book, and woke to find
this epilogue.

THIS pleasant tale is like a little copse:
The honied lines so freshly interlace,
To keep the reader in so sweet a place,
So that he here and there full-hearted
stops;

And oftentimes he feels the dewy drops
Come cool and suddenly against his face,

And, by the wandering melody, may trace
Which way the tender-legged linnet hops.
Oh! what a power has white simplicity!
What mighty power has this gentle story!
I, that do ever feel athirst for glory,
Could at this moment be content to lie
Meekly upon the grass, as those whose
sobblings
Were heard of none beside the mournful
robins.

ON SEEING THE ELGIN
MARBLES

This and the following sonnet were printed
in *The Examiner*, March 9, 1817, and reprinted
in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*.

My spirit is too weak — mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling
sleep,

And each imagin'd pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
Like a sick Eagle looking at the sky.

Yet 't is a gentle luxury to weep
That I have not the cloudy winds to
keep,

Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
Such dim-conceivèd glories of the brain

Bring round the heart an indescribable
feud;

So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
That mingles Grecian grandeur with the
rude

Wasting of old Time — with a billowy
main —

A sun — a shadow of a magnitude.

TO HAYDON

(WITH THE PRECEDING SONNET)

HAYDON! forgive me that I cannot speak
Definitively of these mighty things;
Forgive me, that I have not Eagle's
wings —

That what I want I know not where to
seek:

nd think that I would not be over meek,
In rolling out upfollow'd thunderings,
Even to the steep of Heliconian springs,
Vere I of ample strength for such a
freak —

hink too, that all those numbers should
be thine;

Whose else? In this who touch thy
vesture's hem?

or when men star'd at what was most
divine

With browless idiotism — o'erwise
phlegm —

Thou hadst beheld the Hesperean shine
Of their star in the East, and gone to
worship them.

TO LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.

This stood as dedication to the 1817 volume,
which was published in the month of March.
Charles Cowden Clarke makes the statement:
On the evening when the last proof sheet was
brought from the printer, it was accompanied
by the information that if a "dedication to the
book was intended, it must be sent forthwith."
Whereupon he withdrew to a side table, and in
the buzz of a mixed conversation (for there
were several friends in the room) he composed
and brought to Charles Ollier, the publisher,
the dedication sonnet to Leigh Hunt.'

GLORY and loveliness have pass'd away;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreath'd incense do we see upborne
Into the east, to meet the smiling day:
No crowd of nymphs soft-voic'd and young,
and gay,

In woven baskets bringing ears of corn,
Roses, and pinks, and violets, to adorn
The shrine of Flora in her early May.
But there are left delights as high as these,

And I shall ever bless my destiny,
That in a time, when under pleasant trees
Pan is no longer sought, I feel a free,
A leafy luxury, seeing I could please

With these poor offerings, a man like
thee.

ON THE SEA

Sent in a letter to Reynolds, dated April 17,
1817. 'From want of regular rest,' Keats
says, 'I have been rather *nervus*, and the pas-
sage in *Lear* — "Do you not hear the sea?" —
has haunted me intensely.' He then copies the
sonnet, which was published in *The Champion*,
August 17 of the same year. The letter was
written from Carisbrooke. He had been sent
away from London by his brothers a month
before, shortly after the appearance of his first
volume of *Poems*, and his letters show the
nervous, restless condition into which he had
been driven by that venture.

It keeps eternal whisperings around

Desolate shores, and with its mighty
swell

Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the
spell

Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy
sound.

Often 't is in such gentle temper found,
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be mov'd for days from where it some-
time fell,

When last the winds of Heaven were
unbound.

O ye! who have your eyeballs vex'd and
tir'd,

Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;
O ye! whose ears are dinn'd with up-
roar rude,

Or fed too much with cloying melody,—
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth,
and brood

Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired!

LINES

First published, with the date 1817, in *Life*,
Letters and Literary Remains. It is barely
possible that this is the 'song' to which Keats
refers in a letter to Benjamin Bailey, dated
November 22, 1817, when he says: 'I am cer-
tain of nothing but the holiness of the Heart's
affections, and the truth of Imagination. What
the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth

— whether it existed before or not — for I have the same idea of all our passions as of Love: they are all, in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty. In a word, you may know my favourite speculation by my first Book, and the little Song I sent in my last, which is a representation from the fancy of the probable mode of operating in these matters.'

UNFELT, unheard, unseen,
I've left my little queen,
Her languid arms in silver slumber lying:
Ah! through their nestling touch,
Who — who could tell how much
There is for madness — cruel, or complying?

Those faery lids how sleek!
Those lips how moist! — they speak,
In ripest quiet, shadows of sweet sounds:
Into my fancy's ear
Melting a burden dear,
How 'Love doth know no fulness, and no bounds.'

True! — tender monitors!
I bend unto your laws:
This sweetest day for dalliance was born!
So, without more ado,
I'll feel my heaven anew,
For all the blushing of the hasty morn.

ON —

Published with the date 1817 by Lord Houghton in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*, but slightly varied in form when reprinted in the Aldine edition.

THINK not of it, sweet one, so; —
Give it not a tear;
Sigh thou mayst, and bid it go
Any — any where.

Do not look so sad, sweet one, —
Sad and fadingly;
Shed one drop, then it is gone,
Oh! 't was born to die!

Still so pale? then dearest weep;
Weep, I'll count the tears,
For each will I invent a bliss
For thee in after years.

Brighter has it left thine eyes
Than a sunny rill;
And thy whispering melodies
Are more tender still.

Yet — as all things mourn awhile
At fleeting blisses;
E'en let us too; but be our dirge
A dirge of kisses.

ON A PICTURE OF LEANDER

This sonnet was printed in 1829 in *The Gem, a Literary Annual*, edited by Thomas Hood. It is not dated, but may fairly be assigned to this time.

COME hither, all sweet maidens soberly,
Down-looking aye, and with a chasten'd light
Hid in the fringes of your eyelids white,
And meekly let your fair hands joined be,
As if so gentle that ye could not see,
Untouch'd, a victim of your beauty bright,
Sinking away to his young spirit's night,
Sinking bewilder'd 'mid the dreary sea:
'T is young Leander toiling to his death;
Nigh swooning, he doth purse his weary lips
For Hero's cheek, and smiles against
her smile.
O horrid dream! see how his body dips
Dead-heavy; arms and shoulders gleam
awhile:
He's gone; up bubbles all his amorous
breath!

ON LEIGH HUNT'S POEM, 'THE STORY OF RIMINI'

Dated 1817 in the *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*, and placed next after the preceding

Who loves to peer up at the morning sun,
 With half-shut eyes and comfortable
 cheek,
 Let him, with this sweet tale, full often
 seek
 for meadows where the little rivers run;
 Who loves to linger with that brightest one
 Of Heaven — Hesperus — let him lowly
 speak
 These numbers to the night, and star-
 light meek,
 Or moon, if that her hunting be begun.
 He who knows these delights, and too is
 prone
 To moralize upon a smile or tear,
 Will find at once a region of his own,
 A bower for his spirit, and will steer
 To alleys, where the fir-tree drops its cone,
 Where robins hop, and fallen leaves are
 sear.

SONNET

First published in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*, but dated 1817 in a manuscript copy owned by Sir Charles Dilke. Keats sends it as his 'last sonnet' in a letter to Reynolds written on the last day of January, 1818.

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to
 be
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming
 brain,
 Before high pilèd books, in charactry,
 Hold like rich garners the full-ripen'd
 grain;
 When I behold, upon the night's starr'd
 face,
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
 And think that I may never live to trace
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of
 chance;
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!
 That I shall never look upon thee more,
 Never have relish in the faery power
 Of unreflecting love; — then on the shore
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
 Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

ON SEEING A LOCK OF
MILTON'S HAIR

'I was at Hunt's the other day,' writes Keats to Bailey, January 23, 1818, 'and he surprised me with a real authenticated lock of *Milton's Hair*. I know you would like what I wrote thereon, so here it is — as they say of a sheep in a *Nursery Book*.' 'This I did,' he adds, after copying the lines, 'at Hunt's at his request — perhaps I should have done something better alone and at home.' Lord Houghton printed the verse in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*.

CHIEF of organic numbers!
 Old Scholar of the Spheres!
 Thy spirit never slumbers,
 But rolls about our ears,
 For ever and for ever!
 O what a mad endeavour

Worketh he,
 Who to thy sacred and ennobled hearse
 Would offer a burnt sacrifice of verse
 And melody.

How heavenward thou soundest,
 Live Temple of sweet noise,
 And Discord unconfoundest,
 Giving Delight new joys,
 And Pleasure nobler pinions!
 O, where are thy dominions?

Lend thine ear
 To a young Delian oath, — ay, by thy soul,
 By all that from thy mortal lips did roll,
 And by the kernel of thine earthly love,
 Beauty, in things on earth, and things above,
 I swear!

When every childish fashion
 Has vanish'd from my rhyme,
 Will I, grey-gone in passion,
 Leave to an after-time,
 Hymning and harmony
 Of thee, and of thy works, and of thy
 life;
 But vain is now the burning and the strife,
 Pangs are in vain, until I grow high-rife
 With old Philosophy,
 And mad with glimpses of futurity!

For many years my offering must be hush'd;
 When I do speak, I'll think upon this
 hour,
 Because I feel my forehead hot and flush'd.
 Even at the simplest vassal of thy
 power,—
 A lock of thy bright hair—
 Sudden it came,
 And I was startled, when I caught thy name
 Coupled so unaware;
 Yet, at the moment, temperate was my
 blood.
 I thought I had beheld it from the flood.

ON SITTING DOWN TO READ 'KING LEAR' ONCE AGAIN

In a letter to his brothers, dated January 23, 1818, Keats says: 'I think a little change has taken place in my intellect lately—I cannot bear to be uninterested or unemployed, I, who for so long a time have been addicted to passiveness. Nothing is finer for the purposes of great productions than a very gradual ripening of the intellectual powers. As an instance of this—observe—I sat down yesterday to read *King Lear* once again: the thing appeared to demand the prologue of a sonnet, I wrote it, and began to read—(I know you would like to see it). So you see,' he goes on after copying the sonnet, 'I am getting at it with a sort of determination and strength, though verily I do not feel it at this moment.' The sonnet was printed in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*.

O GOLDEN-TONGUED Romance, with serene lute!

Fair plumèd Syren, Queen of far away!
 Leave melodizing on this wintry day,
 Shut up thine olden pages, and be mute:
 Adieu! for once again the fierce dispute,
 Betwixt damnation and impassion'd clay,
 Must I burn through; once more humbly
 assay

The bitter sweet of this Shakespearean fruit:

Chief Poet! and ye clouds of Albion,
 Begetters of our deep eternal theme!

When through the old oak forest I am gone,
 Let me not wander in a barren dream,
 But when I am consumèd in the Fire,
 Give me new Phoenix-wings to fly at my
 desire.

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN

In sending his *Robin Hood* verses to Reynolds (see next poem), Keats added the following, but from the tenor of his letter, it would appear that they had been written earlier and were sent at Reynolds's request. The poem was published by Keats in his *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and other Poems*, 1820. The friends were then in full tide of sympathy with the Elizabethans, and would have been very much at home with Shakespeare, Jonson, and Marlowe at the Mermaid.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
 What Elysium have ye known,
 Happy field or mossy cavern,
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
 Have ye tippled drink more fine
 Than mine host's Canary wine?
 Or are fruits of Paradise
 Sweeter than those dainty pies
 Of venison? O generous food!
 Drest as though bold Robin Hood
 Would, with his maid Marian,
 Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
 Mine host's sign-board flew away,
 Nobody knew whither, till
 An astrologer's old quill
 To a sheepskin gave the story,
 Said he saw you in your glory,
 Underneath a new-old sign
 Sipping beverage divine,
 And pledging with contented smack
 The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
 What Elysium have ye known,
 Happy field or mossy cavern,
 Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

ROBIN HOOD

TO A FRIEND

The friend was J. H. Reynolds, who had sent us two sonnets which he had written on Robin Hood. Keats's letter, dated February 1818, is full of energetic pleasantry on the subject which 'has a palpable design upon us,' and concludes: 'Let us have the old Poet's Robin Hood. Your letter and its sonnets give me more pleasure than will the Fourth Book of *Childe Harold*, and the whole of anybody's life and opinions. In return for your share of Filberts, I have gathered a few Catkins. I hope they'll look pretty.' Keats included a poem in his *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Martin and other Poems*, 1820, with some trifling changes of text.

No! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years:
Many times have Winter's shears,
Frozen North, and chilling East,
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
Since men knew nor rent nor leases. 10

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amaz'd to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June 20
You may go, with sun or moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you;
But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold;
Never one, of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can
Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile

To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent; 30
For he left the merry tale,
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the 'grenè shawe';
All are gone away and past!
And if Robin should be cast
Sudden from his turfed grave,
And if Marian should have 40
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze:
He would swear, for all his oaks,
Fall'n beneath the dock-yard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas;
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her — strange! that honey
Can't be got without hard money!

So it is; yet let us sing
Honour to the old bow-string! 50
Honour to the bugle horn!
Honour to the woods unshorn!
Honour to the Lincoln green!
Honour to the archer keen!
Honour to tight little John,
And the horse he rode upon!
Honour to bold Robin Hood,
Sleeping in the underwood!
Honour to Maid Marian, 60
And to all the Sherwood clan!
Though their days have hurried by,
Let us two a burden try.

TO THE NILE

Composed February 4, 1818, in company with Shelley and Hunt, who each wrote a sonnet on the same theme. It was first published by Lord Houghton in the *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*.

Son of the old moon-mountains African!
Chief of the Pyramid and Crocodile!
We call thee fruitful, and that very while

A desert fills our seeing's inward span;
Nurse of swart nations since the world
began,

Art thou so fruitful? or dost thou be-
guile

Such men to honour thee, who, worn with
toil,

Rest for a space 'twixt Cairo and De-
can?

O may dark fancies err! They surely
do;

'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste
Of all beyond itself. Thou dost bedew

Green rushes like our rivers, and dost
taste

The pleasant sun-rise. Green isles hast
thou too,

And to the sea as happily dost haste.

TO SPENSER

Printed in *Life, Letters and Literary Re-
mains*, and undated. Afterward, when Lord
Houghton printed it in the Aldine edition of
1876, he noted that he had seen a transcript
given by Keats to Mrs. Longmore, a sister of
Reynolds, dated by the recipient, February 5,
1818. But Lord Houghton is confident that
the sonnet was written much earlier.

SPENSER! a jealous honourer of thine,
A forester deep in thy midmost trees,
Did last eve ask my promise to refine
Some English that might strive thine ear
to please.

But Elfin Poet, 't is impossible
For an inhabitant of wintry earth
To rise like Phœbus with a golden quill
Fire-wing'd and make a morning in his
mirth.

It is impossible to escape from toil
O' the sudden and receive thy spiriting:
The flower must drink the nature of the
soil

Before it can put forth its blossoming:
Be with me in the summer days, and I
Will for thine honour and his pleasure
try.

SONG

WRITTEN ON A BLANK PAGE IN BEAU-
MONT AND FLETCHER'S WORKS, BE-
TWEEN 'CUPID'S REVENGE' AND
'THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN'

First published in *Life, Letters and Literary
Remains*, and undated.

SPIRIT here that reignest!
Spirit here that painest!
Spirit here that burnest!
Spirit here that mournest!

Spirit, I bow
My forehead low,
Enshaded with thy pinions.
Spirit, I look
All passion-struck
Into thy pale dominions.

Spirit here that laughest!
Spirit here that quaffest!
Spirit here that dancest!
Noble soul that prancest!

Spirit, with thee
I join in the glee
A-nudging the elbow of Momus.
Spirit, I flush
With a Bacchanal blush
Just fresh from the Banquet of
Comus.

FRAGMENT

Under the flag
Of each his faction, they to battle bring
Their embryo atoms.

MILTON.

Published in *Life, Letters and Literary Re-
mains*, without date.

WELCOME joy, and welcome sorrow,
Lethe's weed and Hermes' feather;
Come to-day, and come to-morrow,
I do love you both together!
I love to mark sad faces in fair weather
And hear a merry laugh amid the thunder.

Fair and foul I love together.
 Meadows sweet where flames are under,
 And a giggle at a wonder;
 Visage sage at pantomime;
 Funeral, and steeple-chime;
 Infant playing with a skull;
 Morning fair, and shipwreck'd hull;
 Nightshade with the woodbine kissing;
 Serpents in red roses hissing;
 Cleopatra regal-dress'd
 With the aspic at her breast;
 Dancing music, music sad,
 Both together, sane and mad;
 Muses bright, and muses pale;
 Sombre Saturn, Momus hale;—
 Laugh and sigh, and laugh again;
 Oh, the sweetness of the pain!
 Muses bright and muses pale,
 Bare your faces of the veil;
 Let me see; and let me write
 Of the day, and of the night—
 Both together:—let me slake
 All my thirst for sweet heart-ache!
 Let my bower be of yew,
 Interwreath'd with myrtles new;
 Pines and lime-trees full in bloom,
 And my couch a low grass-tomb.

WHAT THE THRUSH SAID

In a long letter to Reynolds, dated February 1818, Keats writes earnestly of the sources of inspiration to a poet, and especially of the need of a receptive attitude: 'Let us open our eyes like a flower, and be passive and receptive; budding patiently under the eye of Apollo and taking hints from every noble object that favours us with a visit—Sap will be given us for meat, and dew for drink. I was led into these thoughts, my dear Reynolds, by the beauty of the morning operating on a sense of Idleness. I have not read any Book the Morning said I was right—I had no idea but of the Morning, and the Thrush said I was right, seeming to say,' and then follows the poem. It was first printed in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*.

O THOU whose face hath felt the Winter's wind,
 Whose eye has seen the snow-clouds hung in mist,
 And the black elm tops 'mong the freezing stars,
 To thee the spring will be a harvest-time.
 O thou, whose only book has been the light
 Of supreme darkness which thou feddest on
 Night after night when Phœbus was away,
 To thee the Spring shall be a triple morn.
 O fret not after knowledge—I have none,
 And yet my song comes native with the warmth.
 O fret not after knowledge—I have none,
 And yet the Evening listens. He who sad-
 dens
 At thought of idleness cannot be idle,
 And he's awake who thinks himself asleep.

WRITTEN IN ANSWER TO A SONNET ENDING THUS:—

'Dark eyes are dearer far
 Than those that mock the hyacinthine bell'
 BY J. H. REYNOLDS.

Dated by Lord Houghton 'February, 1818,' in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*, where it was first printed.

BLUE! 'Tis the life of heaven,—the domain
 Of Cynthia,—the wide palace of the sun,—
 The tent of Hesperus, and all his train,—
 The bosomer of clouds, gold, gray, and dun.
 Blue! 'Tis the life of waters—ocean
 And all its vassal streams, pools numberless,
 May rage, and foam, and fret, but never can
 Subside, if not to dark blue nativeness.
 Blue! Gentle cousin of the forest-green,
 Married to green in all the sweetest flowers,—
 Forget-me-not,—the blue bell,—and, that queen

Of secrecy, the violet: what strange
powers
Hast thou, as a mere shadow ! But how
great,
When in an Eye thou art, alive with fate !

TO JOHN HAMILTON
REYNOLDS

Undated, but placed by Lord Houghton directly after the preceding in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*.

O THAT a week could be an age, and we
Felt parting and warm meeting every
week;
Then one poor year a thousand years would
be,
The flush of welcome ever on the cheek:
So could we live long life in little space,
So time itself would be annihilate,
So a day's journey in oblivious haze
To serve our joys would lengthen and
dilate.
O to arrive each Monday morn from Ind !
To land each Tuesday from the rich Le-
vant !
In little time a host of joys to bind,
And keep our souls in one eternal pant !

This morn, my friend, and yester-evening
taught
Me how to harbor such a happy thought.

THE HUMAN SEASONS

This sonnet was sent by Keats in a letter to Benjamin Bailey, from Teignmouth, March 13, 1818, and was printed the next year in Leigh Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book*, but Keats did not include the verses in his 1820 volume.

FOUR Seasons fill the measure of the year;
There are four seasons in the mind of
man:
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span:
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honied eud of youthful thought
he loves
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto heaven: quiet coves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close; contented so to look
On mists in idleness — to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal na-
ture.

ENDYMION

KEATS began this poem in the spring of 1817 and finished it and saw it through the press in just about a year. It is interesting to follow in his correspondence the growth of the poem. The subject in general had been in his mind at least since the summer of 1816, when he wrote *I stood tiptoe upon a little hill*, and the poem *Sleep and Poetry* hints also at the occupation of his mind, though through all the earlier and partly imitative period of his poetical growth he was drawn almost equally by the romance to which Spenser and Leigh Hunt introduced him, and the classic themes which his early studies, Chapman and the Elgin marbles, all conspired to make real. In April, 1817, he writes as one absorbed in the delights of poetry and stimulated by it to production. 'I find,' he writes to Reynolds from Carisbrooke, April 18, 'I cannot exist without Poetry—half the day will not do—the whole of it—I began with a little, but habit has made me a Leviathan. I had become all in a Tremble from not having written anything of late—the Sonnet overleaf [*On the Sea*] did me good. I slept the better last night for it—this morning, however, I am nearly as bad again. Just now I opened Spenser, and the first lines I saw were these—

"The noble heart that harbours virtuous thought,

And is with child of glorious great intent,
Can never rest until it forth have brought
Th' eternal brood of glory excellent."

... I shall forthwith begin my *Endymion*, which I hope I shall have got some way with by the time you come, when we will read our verses in a delightful place I have set my heart upon, near the Castle.'

He reported progress to his friends from time to time during the summer: the poem

was his great occupation, and he had the alternate exhilaration and depression which such an undertaking naturally would produce in a temperament as sensitive as his; indeed, one is not surprised to find him near the end of September expressing himself to Haydon as tired of the poem, and looking forward to a Romance to which he meant to devote himself the next summer, for so did his mind swing back and forth, though in truth romance was always uppermost, whether expressed in terms of Grecian mythology or mediævalism. But the main significance of *Endymion*, as one traces the growth of Keats's mind, is in the strong impulse which possessed him to try his wings in a great flight. In a letter to Bailey, October 8, 1817, he quotes from his own letter to George Keats 'in the spring,' and thus at the very time of his setting forth on his great venture, the following notable passage:—

'As to what you say about my being a Poet, I can return no answer but by saying that the high idea I have of poetical fame makes me think I see it towering too high above me. At any rate I have no right to talk until *Endymion* is finished—it will be a test, a trial of my Powers of Imagination, and chiefly of my invention, which is a rare thing indeed—by which I must make 4000 lines of one bare circumstance, and fill them with Poetry: and when I consider that this is a great task, and that when done it will take me but a dozen paces towards the temple of fame—it makes me say: God forbid that I should be without such a task! I have heard Hunt say, and I may be asked—"Why endeavour after a long Poem?" To which I would answer, Do not the lovers of poetry like to have a little region to wander in, where

they may pick and choose, and in which the images are so numerous that many are forgotten and found new in a second reading: which may be food for a week's stroll in summer? Do not they like this better than what they can read through before Mrs. Williams comes down stairs? a morning work at most.

'Besides, a long poem is a test of invention, which I take to be the polar star of Poetry, as Fancy is the sails, and Imagination the rudder. Did our great Poets ever write short Pieces? I mean in the shape of Tales—this same invention seems indeed of late years to have been forgotten as a poetical excellence—But enough of this; I put on no laurels till I shall have finished *Endymion*.'

Keats was drawing near the end of his task when he wrote to Bailey November 22: 'At present I am just arrived at Dorking—to change the scene, change the air

and give me a spur to wind up my Poem, of which there are wanting 500 lines.' And at the end of the first draft is written 'Burford Bridge [near Dorking] November 28, 1817.' Early in January, 1818, Keats gave the first book to Taylor, who 'seemed,' he says, 'more than satisfied with it,' and to Keats's surprise proposed issuing it in quarto if Haydon would make a drawing for a frontispiece. Haydon, when asked, was more eager to paint a picture from some scene in the book, but proposed now to make a finished chalk sketch of Keats's head to be engraved for a frontispiece; for some unmentioned reason, this plan was not carried out.

Keats was copying out the poem for the printer, giving it in book by book and reading the proofs until April, when it was ready save the Preface. This with dedication and title-page he had sent to his Publishers March 21. They were as follows:

ENDYMION

A ROMANCE

By JOHN KEATS

'The stretched metre of an antique song.'
Shakspeare's Sonnets.

INSCRIBED,

WITH EVERY FEELING OF PRIDE AND REGRET
AND WITH 'A BOWED MIND'

TO THE MEMORY OF

THE MOST ENGLISH OF POETS EXCEPT SHAKSPEARE,
THOMAS CHATTERTON

PREFACE

IN a great nation, the work of an individual is of so little importance; his pleadings and excuses are so uninteresting; his 'way of life' such a nothing, that a Preface seems a sort of impertinent bow to strangers who care nothing about it.

A Preface, however, should be down in so many words; and such a one that by an

eye-glance over the type the Reader may catch an idea of an Author's modesty, and non-opinion of himself—which I sincerely hope may be seen in the few lines I have to write, notwithstanding many proverbs of many ages old which men find a great pleasure in receiving as gospel.

About a twelvemonth since, I published a little book of verses; it was read by some dozen of my friends who lik'd it; and some

dozen whom I was unacquainted with, who did not.

Now, when a dozen human beings are at words with another dozen, it becomes a matter of anxiety to side with one's friends — more especially when excited thereto by a great love of Poetry. I fought under disadvantages. Before I began I had no inward feel of being able to finish; and as I proceeded my steps were all uncertain. So this Poem must rather be considered as an endeavour than as a thing accomplished; a poor prologue to what, if I live, I humbly hope to do. In duty to the Public I should have kept it back for a year or two, knowing it to be so faulty; but I really cannot do so, — by repetition my favourite passages sound vapid in my ears, and I would rather redeem myself with a new Poem should this one be found of any interest.

I have to apologize to the lovers of simplicity for touching the spell of loneliness that hung about Endymion; if any of my lines plead for me with such people I shall be proud.

It has been too much the fashion of late to consider men bigoted and addicted to every word that may chance to escape their lips; now I here declare that I have not any particular affection for any particular phrase, word, or letter in the whole affair. I have written to please myself, and in hopes to please others, and for a love of fame; if I neither please myself, nor others, nor get fame, of what consequence is Phraseology.

I would fain escape the bickerings that all works not exactly in chime bring upon their begetters — but this is not fair to expect, there must be conversation of some sort and to object shows a man's consequence. In case of a London drizzle or a Scotch mist, the following quotation from Marston may perhaps 'stead me as an umbrella for an hour or so: 'let it be the curtesy of my peruser rather to pity my self-hindering labours than to malice me.'

One word more — for we cannot help

seeing our own affairs in every point of view — should any one call my dedication to Chatterton affected I answer as followeth: 'Were I dead, sir, I should like a book dedicated to me.'

TEIGNMOUTH,

March 19th, 1818.

This Preface was shown either before or after it was in type to Reynolds and other friends, and Reynolds objected to it in terms which may be inferred from the following letter which Keats wrote him April 9, 1818, and which is so striking a reflection of his mind, when contemplating his finished work, that it should be read in connection with the poem: —

'Since you all agree that the thing is bad, it must be so — though I am not aware there is anything like Hunt in it (and if there is, it is my natural way, and I have something in common with Hunt). Look it over again, and examine into the motives, the seeds, from which any one sentence sprung — I have not the slightest feel of humility toward the public — or to anything in existence, — but the eternal Being, the Principle of Beauty, and the Memory of Great Men. When I am writing for myself for the mere sake of the moment's enjoyment, perhaps nature has its course with me — but a Preface is written to the Public; a thing I cannot help looking upon as an Enemy, and which I cannot address without feelings of Hostility. If I write a Preface in a supple or subdued style, it will not be in character with me as a public speaker — I would be subdued before my friends, and thank them for subduing me — but among Multitudes of Men — I have no feel of stooping; I hate the idea of humility to them.

'I never wrote one single line of Poetry with the least Shadow of public thought.

'Forgive me for vexing you and making a Trojan horse of such a Trifle, both with respect to the matter in question, and myself — but it eases me to tell you — I could

not live without the love of my friends — I would jump down *Ætna* for any great Public good — but I hate a mawkish Popularity. I cannot be subdued before them; my Glory would be to daunt and dazzle the thousand jabberers about pictures and books. I see swarms of Porcupines with their quills erect “like lime-twigs set to catch my winged book,” and I would fright them away with a torch. You will say my Preface is not much of a Torch. It would have been too insulting “to begin from Jove,” and I could not set a golden head upon a thing of clay. If there is any fault in the Preface it is not affectation, but an undersong of disrespect to the Public. If I write another Preface, it must be without a thought of those people — I will think about it. If it should not reach you in four or five days, tell Taylor to publish it without a Preface, and let the Dedication simply stand “Inscribed to the Memory of Thomas Chatterton.” The next day he wrote to his friend, inclosing a new draft: ‘I am anxious you should find this Preface tolerable. If there is an affectation in it ’t is natural to me. Do let the Printer’s Devil cook it, and let me be as “the casing air.” You are too good in this matter — were I in your state, I am certain I should have no thought but of discontent and illness — I might though be taught Patience: I had an idea of giving no Preface; however, don’t you think this had better go? O, let it — one should not be too timid — of committing faults.’

The Dedication stood as Keats proposed, and the new Preface, which is as follows :

PREFACE

KNOWING within myself the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.

What manner I mean, will be quite clear to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished. The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they if I thought a year’s castigation would do them any good; — it will not: the foundations are too sandy. It is just that this youngster should die away: a sad thought for me, if I had not some hope that while it is dwindling I may be plotting, and fitting myself for verses fit to live.

This may be speaking too presumptuously, and may deserve a punishment: but no feeling man will be forward to inflict it: he will leave me alone, with the conviction that there is not a fiercer hell than the failure in a great object. This is not written with the least atom of purpose to forestall criticisms of course, but from the desire I have to conciliate men who are competent to look, and who do look with a zealous eye, to the honour of English literature.

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

I hope I have not in too late a day touched the beautiful mythology of Greece, and dulled its brightness: for I wish to try once more, before I bid it farewell.

TEIGNMOUTH,
April 10, 1818.

BOOK I

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever:
 Its loveliness increases; it will never
 Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet
 breathing.

Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreath-
 ing

A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
 Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
 Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darken'd
 ways ¹⁰

Made for our searching: yes, in spite of
 all,

Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the
 moon,

Trees old and young, sprouting a shady
 boon

For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
 With the green world they live in; and clear
 rills

That for themselves a cooling covert make
 'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,
 Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose
 blooms: ¹⁹

And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
 We have imagined for the mighty dead;
 All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
 An endless fountain of immortal drink,
 Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
 For one short hour; no, even as the trees
 That whisper round a temple become soon
 Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
 The passion poesy, glories infinite, ²⁹
 Haunt us till they become a cheering light
 Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
 That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'er-
 cast,

They always must be with us, or we die.

Therefore 't is with full happiness that I
 Will trace the story of Endymion.

The very music of the name has gone
 Into my being, and each pleasant scene
 Is growing fresh before me as the green
 Of our own valleys: so I will begin
 Now while I cannot hear the city's din; ⁴⁰
 Now while the early budders are just new,
 And run in mazes of the youngest hue
 About old forests; while the willow trails
 Its delicate amber; and the dairy pails
 Bring home increase of milk. And, as the
 year

Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly
 steer

My little boat, for many quiet hours,
 With streams that deepen freshly into bow-
 ers.

Many and many a verse I hope to write,
 Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and
 white, ⁵⁰

Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the bees
 Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,
 I must be near the middle of my story.

O may no wintry season, bare, and hoary,
 See it half-finish'd: but let Autumn bold,
 With universal tinge of sober gold,
 Be all about me when I make an end.

And now at once, adventuresome, I send
 My herald thought into a wilderness:
 There let its trumpet blow, and quickly
 dress ⁶⁰

My uncertain path with green, that I may
 speed

Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

Upon the sides of Latmos was outspread
 A mighty forest; for the moist earth fed
 So plenteously all weed-hidden roots
 Into o'erhanging boughs, and precious
 fruits.

And it had gloomy shades, sequestered
 deep,

Where no man went; and if from shepherd's
 keep

A lamb stray'd far a-down those inmost
 glens,

Never again saw he the happy pens ⁷⁰
 Whither his brethren, bleating with con-
 tent,

Over the hills at every nightfall went.
Among the shepherds, 't was believed ever,
That not one fleecy lamb which thus did
sever

From the white flock, but pass'd unworrièd
By angry wolf, or pard with prying head,
Until it came to some unfooted plains
Where fed the herds of Pan: aye great his
gains

Who thus one lamb did lose. Paths there
were many,
Winding through palmy fern, and rushes
fenny, 80

And ivy banks; all leading pleasantly
To a wide lawn, whence one could only see
Stems thronging all around between the
swell

Of turf and slanting branches: who could
tell

The freshness of the space of heaven
above,

Edged round with dark tree-tops ? through
which a dove

Would often beat its wings, and often too
A little cloud would move across the blue.

Full in the middle of this pleasantness
There stood a marble altar, with a tress 90
Of flowers budded newly; and the dew
Had taken fairy phantasies to strew
Daisies upon the sacred sward last eve,
And so the dawned light in pomp receive.
For 't was the morn: Apollo's upward fire
Made every eastern cloud a silvery pyre
Of brightness so unsullied, that therein
A melancholy spirit well might win
Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine
Into the winds: rain-scented eglantine 100
Gave temperate sweets to that well-wooing
sun;

The lark was lost in him; cold springs had
run

To warm their chilliest bubbles in the grass;
Man's voice was on the mountains; and the
mass

Of nature's lives and wonders pulsed ten-
fold,

To feel this sun-rise and its glories old.

Now while the silent workings of the
dawn

Were busiest, into that self-same lawn
All suddenly, with joyful cries, there sped
A troop of little children garlanded; 110
Who gathering round the altar seem'd to pry
Earnestly round as wishing to espy
Some folk of holiday: nor had they waited
For many moments, ere their ears were
sated

With a faint breath of music, which ev'n
then

Fill'd out its voice, and died away again.
Within a little space again it gave
Its airy swellings, with a gentle wave,
To light-hung leaves, in smoothest echoes
breaking

Through copse-clad valleys,—ere their
death, o'ertaking 120

The surgy murmurs of the lonely sea.

And now, as deep into the wood as we
Might mark a lynx's eye, there glimmer'd
light

Fair faces and a rush of garments white,
Plainer and plainer showing, till at last
Into the widest alley they all past,
Making directly for the woodland altar.
O kindly muse ! let not my weak tongue
falter

In telling of this goodly company,
Of their old piety, and of their glee: 13
But let a portion of ethereal dew
Fall on my head, and presently unweave
My soul; that I may dare, in wayfaring,
To stammer where old Chaucer used to
sing.

Leading the way, young damsels danced
along,

Bearing the burden of a shepherd song;
Each having a white wicker, overbrimm'd
With April's tender younglings: next, well
trimm'd,

A crowd of shepherds with as sunburnt
looks

As may be read of in Arcadian books; 140
Such as sat listening round Apollo's pipe,

When the great deity, for earth too ripe,
 Let his divinity o'erflowing die
 In music, through the vales of Thessaly:
 Some idly trail'd their sheep-hooks on the
 ground,

And some kept up a shrilly mellow sound
 With ebon-tipped flutes: close after these,
 Now coming from beneath the forest trees,
 A venerable priest full soberly,
 Begirt with minist'ring looks: alway his
 eye 150

Steadfast upon the matted turf he kept,
 And after him his sacred vestments swept.
 From his right hand there swung a vase,
 milk-white,

Of mingled wine, out-sparkling generous
 light;
 And in his left he held a basket full
 Of all sweet herbs that searching eye could
 cull:

Wild thyme, and valley-lilies whiter still
 Than Leda's love, and cresses from the rill.
 His aged head, crowned with beechen
 wreath,

Seem'd like a poll of ivy in the teeth 160
 Of winter hoar. Then came another
 crowd

Of shepherds, lifting in due time aloud
 Their share of the ditty. After them ap-
 pear'd,

Up-follow'd by a multitude that rear'd
 Their voices to the clouds, a fair-wrought
 car,

Easily rolling so as scarce to mar
 The freedom of three steeds of dapple
 brown:

Who stood therein did seem of great re-
 nown

Among the throng. His youth was fully
 blown,

Showing like Ganymede to manhood grown;
 And, for those simple times, his garments
 were 171

A chieftain king's; beneath his breast, half
 bare,

Was hung a silver bugle, and between
 His nery knees there lay a boar-spear
 keen.

A smile was on his countenance; he seem'd
 To common lookers-on, like one who
 dream'd

Of idleness in groves Elysian:
 But there were some who feelingly could
 scan

A lurking trouble in his nether lip,
 And see that oftentimes the reins would slip
 Through his forgotten hands: then would
 they sigh, 181

And think of yellow leaves, of owlets' cry,
 Of logs piled solemnly. — Ah, well-a-day,
 Why should our young Endymion pine
 away!

Soon the assembly, in a circle ranged,
 Stood silent round the shrine: each look
 was changed

To sudden veneration: women meek
 Beckon'd their sons to silence; while each
 cheek

Of virgin bloom paled gently for slight fear.
 Endymion too, without a forest peer, 190
 Stood, wan, and pale, and with an awed
 face,

Among his brothers of the mountain chase.
 In midst of all, the venerable priest
 Eyed them with joy from greatest to the
 least,

And, after lifting up his aged hands,
 Thus spake he: 'Men of Latmos! shepherd
 bands!

Whose care it is to guard a thousand flocks:
 Whether descended from beneath the rocks
 That overtop your mountains; whether
 come

From valleys where the pipe is never
 dumb; 200

Or from your swelling downs, where sweet
 air stirs

Blue harebells lightly, and where prickly
 furze

Buds lavish gold; or ye, whose precious
 charge

Nibble their fill at ocean's very marge,
 Whose mellow reeds are touch'd with
 sounds forlorn

By the dim echoes of old Triton's horn:

Mothers and wives ! who day by day pre-
pare

The scrip, with needments, for the moun-
tain air;

And all ye gentle girls who foster up
Udderless lambs, and in a little cup ²¹⁰

Will put choice honey for a favour'd youth:
Yea, every one attend ! for in good truth

Our vows are wanting to our great god
Pan.

Are not our lowing heifers sleeker than
Night-swollen mushrooms ? Are not our
wide plains

Speckled with countless fleeces ? Have
not rains

Green'd over April's lap ? No howling sad
Sickens our fearful ewes; and we have had
Great bounty from Endymion our lord.

The earth is glad: the merry lark has
pour'd ²²⁰

His early song against yon breezy sky,
That spreads so clear o'er our solemnity.'

Thus ending, on the shrine he heap'd a
spire

Of teeming sweets, enkindling sacred fire;
Anon he stain'd the thick and spongy sod
With wine, in honour of the shepherd-god.
Now while the earth was drinking it, and
while

Bay leaves were crackling in the fragrant
pile,

And gummy frankincense was sparkling
bright

'Neath smothering parsley, and a hazy
light ²³⁰

Spread grayly eastward, thus a chorus
sang:

'O thou, whose mighty palace roof doth
hang

From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life,
death

Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness;
Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress

Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels
darken;

And through whole solemn hours dost sit,
and hearken

The dreary melody of bedded reeds —

In desolate places, where dank moisture
breeds ²⁴⁰

The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth;

Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth

Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx — do thou
now,

By thy love's milky brow !

By all the trembling mazes that she ran,

Hear us, great Pan !

'O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet,
turtles

Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,
What time thou wanderest at eventide

Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the
side ²⁵⁰

Of thine enmossed realms: O thou, to whom

Broad-leaved fig-trees even now foredoom

Their ripen'd fruitage; yellow-girted bees

Their golden honeycombs; our village leas

Their fairest blossom'd beans and popped
corn;

The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,

To sing for thee; low-creeping strawberries

Their summer coolness; pent-up butterflies

Their freckled wings; yea, the fresh-bud-
ding year

All its completions — be quickly near, ²⁶⁰

By every wind that nods the mountain pine,

O forester divine !

'Thou, to whom every faun and satyr
flies

For willing service; whether to surprise

The squatted hare while in half-sleeping
fit;

Or upward ragged precipices flit

To save poor lambkins from the eagle's
maw;

Or by mysterious enticement draw

Bewilder'd shepherds to their path again;

Or to tread breathless round the frothy
main, ²⁷⁰

And gather up all fancifullest shells

For thee to tumble into Naiads' cells,

And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peep-
ing;
Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
The while they pelt each other on the
crown
With silvery oak-apples, and fir-cones
brown —
By all the echoes that about thee ring,
Hear us, O satyr king !
‘O Harkener to the loud-clapping
shears,
While ever and anon to his shorn peers 280
A ram goes bleating: Winder of the horn,
When snouted wild-boars routing tender
corn
Anger our huntsman: Breather round our
farms,
To keep off mildews, and all weather
harms:
Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds,
That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,
And wither drearily on barren moors:
Dread opener of the mysterious doors
Leading to universal knowledge — see,
Great son of Dryope, 290
The many that are come to pay their vows
With leaves about their brows !
‘Be still the unimaginable lodge
For solitary thinkings; such as dodge
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
Then leave the naked brain: be still the
leaven,
That spreading in this dull and clodded
earth
Gives it a touch ethereal — a new birth:
Be still a symbol of immensity;
A firmament reflected in a sea; 300
An element filling the space between;
An unknown—but no more: we humbly
screen
With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly
bending,
And giving out a shout most heaven-rend-
ing,
Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan,
Upon thy Mount Lycean !’

Even while they brought the burden to a
close,
A shout from the whole multitude arose,
That linger’d in the air like dying rolls
Of abrupt thunder, when Ionian shoals 310
Of dolphins bob their noses through the
brine.
Meantime, on shady levels, mossy fine,
Young companies nimbly began dancing
To the swift treble pipe, and humming
string.
Aye, those fair living forms swam heavenly
To tunes forgotten — out of memory:
Fair creatures ! whose young children’s
children bred
Thermopylæ its heroes — not yet dead,
But in old marbles ever beautiful.
High genitors, unconscious did they cull 320
Time’s sweet first-fruits — they danced to
weariness,
And then in quiet circles did they press
The hillock turf, and caught the latter end
Of some strange history, potent to send
A young mind from its bodily tenement.
Or they might watch the quoit-pitchers,
intent
On either side; pitying the sad death
Of Hyacinthus, when the cruel breath
Of Zephyr slew him, — Zephyr penitent,
Who now, ere Phœbus mounts the firma-
ment, 330
Fondles the flower amid the sobbing rain.
The archers too, upon a wider plain,
Beside the feathery whizzing of the shaft,
And the dull twanging bowstring, and the
raft
Branch down sweeping from a tall ash top,
Call’d up a thousand thoughts to envelope
Those who would watch. Perhaps, the
trembling knee
And frantic gape of lonely Niobe,
Poor, lonely Niobe ! when her lovely young
Were dead and gone, and her caressing
tongue 340
Lay a lost thing upon her paly lip,
And very, very deadliness did nip
Her motherly cheeks. Aroused from this
sad mood

Guarding his forehead, with her round
 elbow,
 From low-grown branches, and his foot-
 steps slow
 From stumbling over stumps and hillocks
 small;
 Until they came to where these streamlets
 fall,
 With mingled bubblings and a gentle
 rush, 420
 Into a river, clear, brimful, and flush
 With crystal mocking of the trees and
 sky.
 A little shallop, floating there hard by,
 Pointed its beak over the fringed bank;
 And soon it lightly dipt, and rose, and sank,
 And dipt again, with the young couple's
 weight, —
 Peona guiding, through the water straight,
 Towards a bowery island opposite;
 Which gaining presently, she steered light
 into a shady, fresh, and ripply cove, 430
 Where nested was an arbour, overwove
 By many a summer's silent fingering;
 To whose cool bosom she was used to bring
 Her playmates, with their needle broid-
 ery,
 And minstrel memories of times gone by.

So she was gently glad to see him laid
 Under her favourite bower's quiet shade,
 On her own couch, new made of flower
 leaves,
 Dried carefully on the cooler side of sheaves
 When last the sun his autumn tresses
 shook, 440
 And the tann'd harvesters rich armfuls
 took.
 Soon was he quieted to slumbrous rest:
 But, ere it crept upon him, he had prest
 Peona's busy hand against his lips,
 And still, a-sleeping, held her finger-tips
 In tender pressure. And as a willow keeps
 A patient watch over the stream that creeps
 Windingly by it, so the quiet maid
 Held her in peace: so that a whispering
 blade
 Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee bustling 450

Down in the bluebells, or a wren light
 rustling
 Among sere leaves and twigs, might all be
 heard.

O magic sleep! O comfortable bird,
 That broodest o'er the troubled sea of the
 mind
 Till it is hush'd and smooth! O unconfined
 Restraint! imprison'd liberty! great key
 To golden palaces, strange minstrelsy,
 Fountains grotesque, new trees, bespangled
 caves,
 Echoing grottoes, full of tumbling waves
 And moonlight; aye, to all the mazy
 world 460
 Of silvery enchantment! — who, upfurl'd
 Beneath thy drowsy wing a triple hour,
 But renovates and lives? — Thus, in the
 bower,
 Endymion was calm'd to life again.
 Opening his eyelids with a healthier brain,
 He said: 'I feel this thine endearing love
 All through my bosom: thou art as a dove
 Trembling its closed eyes and sleeked
 wings
 About me; and the pearliest dew not brings
 Such morning incense from the fields of
 May, 470
 As do those brighter drops that twinkling
 stray
 From those kind eyes, — the very home and
 haunt
 Of sisterly affection. Can I want
 Aught else, aught nearer heaven, than such
 tears?
 Yet dry them up, in bidding hence all fears
 That, any longer, I will pass my days
 Alone and sad. No, I will once more raise
 My voice upon the mountain-heights; once
 more
 Make my horn parley from their foreheads
 hoar:
 Again my trooping hounds their tongues
 shall loll 480
 Around the breathed boar: again I'll poll
 The fair-grown yew-tree, for a chosen bow:
 And, when the pleasant sun is getting low,

Again I'll linger in a sloping mead
To hear the speckled thrushes, and see feed
Our idle sheep. So be thou cheered, sweet !
And, if thy lute is here, softly intreat
My soul to keep in its resolved course.'

Hereat Peona, in their silver source,
Shut her pure sorrow-drops with glad ex-
claim,

490

And took a lute, from which there pulsing
came

A lively prelude, fashioning the way
In which her voice should wander. 'Twas
a lay

More subtle cadenced, more forest wild
Than Dryope's lone lulling of her child;
And nothing since has floated in the air
So mournful strange. Surely some influ-
ence rare

Went, spiritual, through the damsel's hand;
For still, with Delphic emphasis, she spann'd
The quick invisible strings, even though
she saw

500

Endymion's spirit melt away and thaw
Before the deep intoxication.
But soon she came, with sudden burst, upon
Her self-possession — swung the lute aside,
And earnestly said: 'Brother, 't is vain to
hide

That thou dost know of things mysterious,
Immortal, starry; such alone could thus
Weigh down thy nature. Hast thou sinn'd
in aught

Offensive to the heavenly powers? Caught
A Paphian dove upon a message sent? 510
Thy deathful bow against some deer-herd
bent,

Sacred to Dian? Haply, thou hast seen
Her naked limbs among the alders green;
And that, alas! is death. No, I can trace
Something more high perplexing in thy
face!'

Endymion look'd at her, and press'd her
hand,
And said, 'Art thou so pale, who wast so
bland

And merry in our meadows? How is this?

Tell me thine ailment: tell me all amiss! —
Ah! thou hast been unhappy at the change
Wrought suddenly in me. What indeed
more strange?

521

Or more complete to overwhelm surmise?
Ambition is no sluggard: 't is no prize,
That toiling years would put within my
grasp,

That I have sigh'd for: with so deadly gasp
No man e'er panted for a mortal love.
So all have set my heavier grief above
These things which happen. Rightly have
they done:

I, who still saw the horizontal sun
Heave his broad shoulder o'er the edge of
the world,

530

Out-facing Lucifer, and then had hurl'd
My spear aloft, as signal for the chase —
I, who, for very sport of heart, would
race

With my own steed from Araby; pluck
down

A vulture from his towery perching; frown
A lion into growling, loth retire —
To lose, at once, all my toil-breeding fire,
And sink thus low! but I will ease my
breast

Of secret grief, here in this bowery nest.

'This river does not see the naked sky,
Till it begins to progress silverly 541
Around the western border of the wood,
Whence, from a certain spot, its winding
flood

Seems at the distance like a crescent moon:
And in that nook, the very pride of June,
Had I been used to pass my weary eves;
The rather for the sun unwilling leaves
So dear a picture of his sovereign power,
And I could witness his most kingly hour,
When he doth tighten up the golden reins,
And paces leisurely down amber plains 551
His snorting four. Now when his chariot
last

Its beams against the zodiac-lion cast,
There blossom'd suddenly a magic bed
Of sacred ditamy, and poppies red:
At which I wondered greatly, knowing well

That but one night had wrought this flowery spell;
 And, sitting down close by, began to muse
 What it might mean. Perhaps, thought I,
 Morpheus,
 In passing here, his owlet pinions shook;
 Or, it may be, ere matron Night uptook ⁵⁶¹
 Her ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth,
 Had dipt his rod in it: such garland wealth
 Came not by common growth. Thus on I
 thought,
 Until my head was dizzy and distraught.
 Moreover, through the dancing poppies
 stole
 A breeze, most softly lulling to my soul;
 And shaping visions all about my sight
 Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly
 light;
 The which became more strange, and
 strange, and dim, ⁵⁷⁰
 And then were gulf'd in a tumultuous swim:
 And then I fell asleep. Ah, can I tell
 The enchantment that afterwards befell?
 Yet it was but a dream: yet such a dream
 That never tongue, although it overteem
 With mellow utterance, like a cavern
 spring,
 Could figure out and to conception bring
 All I beheld and felt. Methought I lay
 Watching the zenith, where the milky way
 Among the stars in virgin splendour pours;
 And travelling my eye, until the doors ⁵⁸¹
 Of heaven appear'd to open for my flight,
 I became loth and fearful to alight
 From such high soaring by a downward
 glance:
 So kept me steadfast in that airy trance,
 Spreading imaginary pinions wide.
 When, presently, the stars began to glide,
 And faint away, before my eager view:
 At which I sigh'd that I could not pursue,
 And dropt my vision to the horizon's verge;
 And lo! from opening clouds, I saw
 emerge ⁵⁹¹
 The loveliest moon, that ever silver'd o'er
 A shell for Neptune's goblet; she did
 soar
 So passionately bright, my dazzled soul

Commingle with her argent spheres did
 roll
 Through clear and cloudy, even when she
 went
 At last into a dark and vapoury tent —
 Whereat, methought, the lidless-eyed train
 Of planets all were in the blue again.
 To commune with those orbs, once more I
 raised ⁶⁰⁰
 My sight right upward: but it was quite
 dazed
 By a bright something, sailing down apace,
 Making me quickly veil my eyes and face:
 Again I look'd, and, O ye deities,
 Who from Olympus watch our destinies!
 Whence that completed form of all com-
 pleteness?
 Whence came that high perfection of all
 sweetness?
 Speak, stubborn earth, and tell me where,
 O where
 Hast thou a symbol of her golden hair?
 Not oat-sheaves drooping in the western
 sun; ⁶¹⁰
 Not — thy soft hand, fair sister! let me
 shun
 Such folly before thee — yet she had,
 Indeed, locks bright enough to make me
 mad;
 And they were simply gordian'd up and
 braided,
 Leaving, in naked comeliness, unshaded,
 Her pearl round ears, white neck, and
 orb'd brow;
 The which were blended in, I know not
 how,
 With such a paradise of lips and eyes,
 Blush-tinted cheeks, half smiles, and faint-
 est sighs,
 That, when I think thereon, my spirit
 clings ⁶²⁰
 And plays about its fancy, till the stings
 Of human neighbourhood envenom all.
 Unto what awful power shall I call?
 To what high fane? — Ah! see her hover-
 ing feet,
 More bluely vein'd, more soft, more whitely
 sweet

Than those of sea-born Venus, when she
rose

From out her cradle shell. The wind out-
blows

Her scarf into a fluttering pavilion ;
'T is blue, and over-spangled with a million
Of little eyes, as though thou wert to shed,
Over the darkest, lushest bluebell bed, ⁶³¹
Handfuls of daisies.' — 'Endymion, how
strange !

Dream within dream !' — ' She took an
airy range,

And then, towards me, like a very maid,
Came blushing, waning, willing, and afraid,
And press'd me by the hand: Ah ! 't was
too much;

Methought I fainted at the charmed touch,
Yet held my recollection, even as one
Who dives three fathoms where the waters
run

Gurgling in beds of coral: for anon, ⁶⁴⁰
I felt upmounted in that region

Where falling stars dart their artillery forth,
And eagles struggle with the buffeting
north

That balances the heavy meteor-stone; —
Felt too, I was not fearful, nor alone,
But lapp'd and lull'd along the dangerous
sky.

Soon, as it seem'd, we left our journeying
high,

And straightway into frightful eddies
swoop'd;

Such as ay muster where gray time has
scoop'd

Huge dens and caverns in a mountain's
side: ⁶⁵⁰

There hollow sounds aroused me, and I
sigh'd

To faint once more by looking on my bliss —
I was distracted; madly did I kiss

The wooing arms which held me, and did
give

My eyes at once to death: but 't was to live,
To take in draughts of life from the gold
fount

Of kind and passionate looks; to count,
and count

The moments, by some greedy help that
seem'd

A second self, that each might be redeem'd
And plunder'd of its load of blessed-
ness. ⁶⁶⁰

Ah, desperate mortal! I ev'n dared to press
Her very cheek against my crowned lip,
And, at that moment, felt my body dip
Into a warmer air: a moment more,
Our feet were soft in flowers. There was
store

Of newest joys upon that alp. Sometimes
A scent of violets, and blossoming limes,
Loiter'd around us; then of honey cells,
Made delicate from all white-flower bells;
And once, above the edges of our nest, ⁶⁷⁰
An arch face peep'd, — an Oread as I
guess'd.

' Why did I dream that sleep o'erpower'd
me

In midst of all this heaven? Why not see,
Far off, the shadows of his pinions dark,
And stare them from me? But no, like a
spark

That needs must die, although its little
beam

Reflects upon a diamond, my sweet dream
Fell into nothing — into stupid sleep.

And so it was, until a gentle creep,
A careful moving caught my waking
ears, ⁶⁸⁰

And up I started: Ah! my sighs, my tears,
My clenched hands; — for lo! the poppies
hung

Dew-dabbled on their stalks, the ouzel sung
A heavy ditty, and the sullen day

Had chidden herald Hesperus away,
With leaden looks: the solitary breeze
Bluster'd, and slept, and its wild self did
tease

With wayward melancholy; and I thought,
Mark me, Peona! that sometimes it brought
Faint fare-thee-wells, and sigh-shrilled
adieux! — ⁶⁹⁰

Away I wander'd — all the pleasant hues
Of heaven and earth had faded: deepest
shades

Were deepest dungeons; heaths and sunny
 glades
 Were full of pestilent light; our taintless
 rills
 Seem'd sooty, and o'erspread with upturn'd
 gills
 Of dying fish; the vermeil rose had blown
 In frightful scarlet, and its thorns outgrown
 Like spiked aloe. If an innocent bird
 Before my heedless footsteps stirr'd, and
 stirr'd
 In little journeys, I beheld in it ⁷⁰⁰
 A disguised demon, missioned to knit
 My soul with under darkness; to entice
 My stumblings down some monstrous pre-
 cipice:
 Therefore I eager follow'd, and did curse
 The disappointment. Time, that aged
 nurse,
 Rock'd me to patience. Now, thank gentle
 heaven!
 These things, with all their comfortings,
 are given
 To my down-sunken hours, and with thee,
 Sweet sister, help to stem the ebbing sea
 Of weary life.'

Thus ended he, and both
 Sat silent: for the maid was very loth ⁷¹¹
 To answer; feeling well that breathed
 words
 Would all be lost, unheard, and vain as
 swords
 Against the enchain'd crocodile, or leaps
 Of grasshoppers against the sun. She
 weeps,
 And wonders; struggles to devise some
 blame;
 To put on such a look as would say, *Shame*
On this poor weakness! but, for all her
 strife,
 She could as soon have crush'd away the
 life
 From a sick dove. At length, to break the
 pause, ⁷²⁰
 She said with trembling chance: 'Is this
 the cause?
 This all? Yet it is strange, and sad, alas!

That one who through this middle earth
 should pass
 Most like a sojourning demi-god, and leave
 His name upon the harp-string, should
 achieve
 No higher bard than simple maidenhood,
 Singing alone, and fearfully, — how the
 blood
 Left his young cheek; and how he used to
 stray
 He knew not where; and how he would
 say, *nay*,
 If any said 't was love: and yet 't was
 love; ⁷³⁰
 What could it be but love? How a ring-
 dove
 Let fall a sprig of yew-tree in his path;
 And how he died: and then, that love doth
 scathe
 The gentle heart, as northern blasts do
 roses;
 And then the ballad of his sad life closes
 With sighs, and an alas! — Endymion!
 Be rather in the trumpet's mouth, — anon
 Among the winds at large — that all may
 hearken!
 Although, before the crystal heavens
 darken,
 I watch and dote upon the silver lakes ⁷⁴⁰
 Pictured in western cloudiness, that takes
 The semblance of gold rocks and bright
 gold sands,
 Islands, and creeks, and amber-fretted
 strands
 With horses prancing o'er them, palaces
 And towers of amethyst, — would I so tease
 My pleasant days, because I could not
 mount
 Into those regions? The Morpcean fount
 Of that fine element that visions, dreams,
 And fitful whims of sleep are made of,
 streams
 Into its airy channels with so subtle, ⁷⁵⁰
 So thin a breathing, not the spider's shuttle,
 Circled a million times within the space
 Of a swallow's nest-door, could delay a
 trace,
 A tinting of its quality: how light

Must dreams themselves be; seeing they're
more slight

Than the mere nothing that engenders
them !

Then wherefore sully the entrusted gem
Of high and noble life with thoughts so
sick ?

Why pierce high-fronted honour to the
quick

For nothing but a dream ?' Hereat the
youth 760

Look'd up: a conflicting of shame and ruth
Was in his plaited brow: yet his eyelids

Widen'd a little, as when Zephyr bids

A little breeze to creep between the fans

Of careless butterflies: amid his pains

He seem'd to taste a drop of manna-dew,

Full palatable; and a colour grew

Upon his cheek, while thus he lifeful spake.

'Peona ! ever have I long'd to slake

My thirst for the world's praises: nothing
base, 770

No merely slumberous phantasm, could
unlace

The stubborn canvas for my voyage pre-
pared —

Though now 'tis tatter'd; leaving my bark
bare

And sullenly drifting: yet my higher hope

Is of too wide, too rainbow-large a scope,

To fret at myriads of earthly wrecks.

Wherein lies happiness ? In that which
becks

Our ready minds to fellowship divine,

A fellowship with essence; till we shine,

Full alchemized, and free of space. Be-
hold 780

The clear religion of heaven ! Fold

A rose leaf round thy finger's taperness,

And soothe thy lips: hush, when the airy
stress

Of music's kiss impregnates the free winds,

And with a sympathetic touch unbinds

Æolian magic from their lucid wombs:

Then old songs waken from enclouded
tombs;

Old ditties sigh above their father's grave;

Ghosts of melodious prophesyings rave
Round every spot where trod Apollo's
foot; 790

Bronze clarions awake, and faintly bruit,

Where long ago a giant battle was;

And, from the turf, a lullaby doth pass

In every place where infant Orpheus slept.

Feel we these things ? — that moment have
we slept

Into a sort of oneness, and our state

Is like a floating spirit's. But there are

Richer entanglements, enthrallments far

More self-destroying, leading, by degrees,

To the chief intensity: the crown of these

Is made of love and friendship, and sits
high 800

Upon the forehead of humanity.

All its more ponderous and bulky worth

Is friendship, whence there ever issues forth

A steady splendour; but at the tip-top,

There hangs by unseen film, an orb'd drop

Of light, and that is love: its influence

Thrown in our eyes genders a novel sense,

At which we start and fret: till in the end,

Melting into its radiance, we blend, 810

Mingle, and so become a part of it, —

Nor with aught else can our souls interknit

So wingedly: when we combine therewith,

Life's self is nourish'd by its proper pith,

And we are nurtured like a pelican brood.

Aye, so delicious is the unsating food,

That men, who might have tower'd in the
van

Of all the congregated world, to fan

And winnow from the coming step of time

All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime 820

Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,

Have been content to let occasion die,

Whilst they did sleep in love's Elysium.

And, truly, I would rather be struck dumb,

Than speak against this ardent listless-
ness:

For I have ever thought that it might bless

The world with benefits unknowingly;

As does the nightingale, up-perched high,

And cloister'd among cool and bunched

leaves — 829

She sings but to her love, nor e'er conceives

How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-
gray hood.

Just so may love, although 't is understood
The mere commingling of passionate breath,
Produce more than our searching witness-
eth:

What I know not: but who, of men, can
tell

That flowers would bloom, or that green
fruit would swell

To melting pulp, that fish would have
bright mail,

The earth its dower of river, wood, and
vale,

The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-
stones, -839

The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,
Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet,
If human souls did never kiss and greet?

'Now, if this earthly love has power to
make

Men's being mortal, immortal; to shake
Ambition from their memories, and brim
Their measure of content; what merest
whim,

Seems all this poor endeavour after fame,
To one, who keeps within his steadfast
aim

A love immortal, an immortal too.
Look not so wilder'd; for these things are
true 850

And never can be born of atomies
That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-
flies,

Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no, I'm sure,
My restless spirit never could endure
To brood so long upon one luxury,
Unless it did, though fearfully, espy
A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.
My sayings will the less obscured seem
When I have told thee how my waking
sight

Has made me scruple whether that same
night 860

Was pass'd in dreaming. Hearken, sweet
Peona!

Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,

Which we should see but for these dark-
ening boughs,

Lies a deep hollow, from whose ragged
brows

Bushes and trees do lean all round athwart,
And meet so nearly, that with wings out-
raught,

And spreaded tail, a vulture could not glide
Past them, but he must brush on every
side.

Some moulder'd steps lead into this cool
cell,

Far as the slabbed margin of a well, 870
Whose patient level peeps its crystal eye
Right upward, through the bushes, to the
sky.

Oft have I brought thee flowers, on their
stalks set

Like vestal primroses, but dark velvet
Edges them round, and they have golden
pits:

'T was there I got them, from the gaps and
slits

In a mossy stone, that sometimes was my
seat,

When all above was faint with mid-day
heat.

And there in strife no burning thoughts to
heed,

I'd bubble up the water through a reed;
So reaching back to boyhood: make me
ships 881

Of moulted feathers, touchwood, alder
chips,

With leaves stuck in them; and the Nep-
tune be

Of their petty ocean. Oftener, heavily,
When lovelorn hours had left me less a
child,

I sat contemplating the figures wild
Of o'er-head clouds melting the mirror
through.

Upon a day, while thus I watch'd, by flew
A cloudy Cupid, with his bow and quiver;
So plainly character'd, no breeze would
shiver 890

The happy chance: so happy, I was fain
To follow it upon the open plain,

And, therefore, was just going; when, be-
hold !
A wonder, fair as any I have told —
The same bright face I tasted in my sleep,
Smiling in the clear well. My heart did
leap
Through the cool depth. — It moved as if
to flee —
I started up, when lo ! refreshfully,
There came upon my face, in plenteous
showers,
Dew-drops, and dewy buds, and leaves, and
flowers, 900
Wrapping all objects from my smother'd
sight,
Bathing my spirit in a new delight.
Aye, such a breathless honey-feel of bliss
Alone preserved me from the drear abyss
Of death, for the fair form had gone again.
Pleasure is oft a visitant; but pain
Clings cruelly to us, like the gnawing sloth
On the deer's tender haunches: late, and
loth,
'T is scared away by slow returning plea-
sure.
How sickening, how dark the dreadful lei-
sure 910
Of weary days, made deeper exquisite,
By a foreknowledge of unslumbrous night !
Like sorrow came upon me, heavier still,
Than when I wander'd from the poppy
hill:
And a whole age of lingering moments
crept
Sluggishly by, ere more contentment swept
Away at once the deadly yellow spleen.
Yes, thrice have I this fair enchantment
seen;
Once more been tortured with renewed life.
When last the wintry gusts gave over
strife 920
With the conquering sun of spring, and
left the skies
Warm and serene, but yet with moisten'd
eyes
In pity of the shatter'd infant buds, —
That time thou didst adorn, with amber
studs,

My hunting cap, because I laugh'd and
smiled,
Chatted with thee, and many days exiled
All torment from my breast; — 't was even
then,
Straying about, yet coop'd up in the den
Of helpless discontent, — hurling my lance
From place to place, and following at
chance, 930
At last, by hap, through some young trees
it struck,
And, plashing among bedded pebbles, stuck
In the middle of a brook, — whose silver
ramble
Down twenty little falls through reeds and
bramble,
Tracing along, it brought me to a cave,
Whence it ran brightly forth, and white
did lave
The nether sides of mossy stones and
rock, —
'Mong which it gurgled blithe adieus, to
mock
Its own sweet grief at parting. Overhead,
Hung a lush screen of drooping weeds, and
spread 940
Thick, as to curtain up some wood-nymph's
home.
“ Ah ! impious mortal, whither do I roam ! ”
Said I, low-voiced: “ Ah, whither ! ’T is the
grot
Of Proserpine, when Hell, obscure and hot,
Doth her resign; and where her tender
hands
She dabbles, on the cool and sluicy sands:
Or 't is the cell of Echo, where she sits,
And babbles thorough silence, till her wits
Are gone in tender madness, and anon,
Faints into sleep, with many a dying tone
Of sadness. O that she would take my
vows, 951
And breathe them sighingly among the
boughs,
To sue her gentle ears for whose fair head,
Daily, I pluck sweet flowerets from their
bed,
And weave them dyingly — send honey-
whispers

Round every leaf, that all those gentle
lispers

May sigh my love unto her pitying !

O charitable Echo ! hear, and sing

This ditty to her ! — tell her" — So I stay'd

My foolish tongue, and listening, half
afraid, ⁹⁶⁰

Stood stupefied with my own empty folly,

And blushing for the freaks of melancholy.

Salt tears were coming, when I heard my
name

Most fondly lipp'd, and then these accents
came:

"Endymion ! the cave is secreter

Than the isle of Delos. Echo hence shall
stir

No sighs but sigh-warm kisses, or light
noise

Of thy combing hand, the while it travel-
ling cloy

And trembles through my labyrinthine
hair."

At that oppress'd, I hurried in. — Ah !
where ⁹⁷⁰

Are those swift moments ? Whither are
they fled ?

I'll smile no more, Peona; nor will wed
Sorrow, the way to death; but patiently

Bear up against it: so farewell, sad sigh;

And come instead demurest meditation,

To occupy me wholly, and to fashion

My pilgrimage for the world's dusky brink.

No more will I count over, link by link,

My chain of grief: no longer strive to find

A half-forgetfulness in mountain wind ⁹⁸⁰

Blustering about my ears: aye, thou shalt
see,

Dearest of sisters, what my life shall be;

What a calm round of hours shall make
my days.

There is a paly flame of hope that plays

Where'er I look: but yet, I'll say 't is
naught —

And here I bid it die. Have not I caught,
Already, a more healthy countenance ?

By this the sun is setting; we may chance

Meet some of our near-dwellers with my
car.'

This said, he rose, faint-smiling like a
star ⁹⁹⁰

Through autumn mists, and took Peona's
hand:

They stept into the boat, and launch'd from
land.

BOOK II

O SOVEREIGN power of love ! O grief ! O
balm !

All records, saving thine, come cool, and
calm,

And shadowy, through the mist of passed
years:

For others, good or bad, hatred and
tears

Have become indolent; but touching thine,
One sigh doth echo, one poor sob doth

pine,
One kiss brings honey-dew from buried

days.

The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er
their blaze,

Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears,
keen blades,

Struggling, and blood, and shrieks — all
dimly fades ¹⁰

Into some backward corner of the brain;

Yet, in our very souls, we feel amain

The close of Troilus and Cressid sweet.

Hence, pageant history ! hence, gilded
cheat !

Swart planet in the universe of deeds !

Wide sea, that one continuous murmur
breeds

Along the pebbled shore of memory !

Many old rotten-timber'd boats there
be

Upon thy vaporous bosom, magnified

To goodly vessels; many a sail of pride, ²⁰
And golden-keel'd, is left unlaunch'd and

dry.

But wherefore this ? What care, though
owl did fly

About the great Athenian admiral's mast ?
What care, though striding Alexander past

The Indus with his Macedonian numbers ?
Though old Ulysses tortured from his
slumbers

The glutt'd Cyclops, what care ? — Juliet
leaning

Amid her window-flowers, — sighing, —
weaning

Tenderly her fancy from its maiden snow,
Doth more avail than these: the silver
flow 30

Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,
Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,
Are things to brood on with more ardency
Than the death-day of empires. Fearfully
Must such conviction come upon his head,
Who, thus far, discontent, has dared to
tread,

Without one muse's smile, or kind behest,
The path of love and poesy. But rest,
In chafing restlessness, is yet more drear
Than to be crush'd, in striving to uprear 40
Love's standard on the battlements of song.
So once more days and nights aid me along,
Like legion'd soldiers.

Brain-sick shepherd-prince,
What promise hast thou faithful guarded
since

The day of sacrifice ? Or, have new sor-
rows

Come with the constant dawn upon thy
morrrows ?

Alas ! 't is his old grief. For many days,
Has he been wandering in uncertain ways:
Through wilderness, and woods of mossed
oaks ;

Counting his woe-worn minutes, by the
strokes 50

Of the lone wood-cutter ; and listening
still,

Hour after hour, to each lush-leaved rill.
Now he is sitting by a shady spring,
And elbow-deep with feverous fingering
Stems the upbursting cold: a wild rose tree
Pavilions him in bloom, and he doth see
A bud which snares his fancy: lo ! but now
He plucks it, dips its stalk in the water:
how !

It swells, it buds, it flowers beneath his
sight ;

And, in the middle, there is softly pight 60
A golden butterfly ; upon whose wings
There must be surely character'd strange
things,

For with wide eye he wonders, and smiles
oft.

Lightly this little herald flew aloft,
Follow'd by glad Endymion's clasped
hands :

Onward it flies. From languor's sullen
bands

His limbs are loosed, and eager, on he hies
Dazzled to trace it in the sunny skies.

It seem'd he flew, the way so easy was ;
And like a new-born spirit did he pass 70
Through the green evening quiet in the sun,
O'er many a heath, through many a wood-
land dun,

Through buried paths, where sleepy twi-
light dreams

The summer time away. One track un-
seams

A wooded cleft, and, far away, the blue
Of ocean fades upon him ; then, anew,
He sinks adown a solitary glen,
Where there was never sound of mortal
men,

Saving, perhaps, some snow-light cadences
Melting to silence, when upon the breeze 80
Some holy bark let forth an anthem sweet,
To cheer itself to Delphi. Still his feet
Went swift beneath the merry-winged
guide,

Until it reach'd a splashing fountain's side
That, near a cavern's mouth, for ever
pour'd

Unto the temperate air: then high it soar'd,
And, downward, suddenly began to dip,
As if, athirst with so much toil, 't would
sip

The crystal spout-head: so it did, with
touch

Most delicate, as though afraid to smutch, 90
Even with mealy gold, the waters clear.
But, at that very touch, to disappear

So fairy-quick, was strange ! Bewildered,
Endymion sought around, and shook each
bed

Of covert flowers in vain; and then he flung
Himself along the grass. What gentle
tongue,

What whisperer, disturb'd his gloomy rest ?
It was a nymph uprisen to the breast
In the fountain's pebbly margin, and she
stood

'Mong lilies, like the youngest of the
brood. 100

To him her dripping hand she softly kist,
And anxiously began to plait and twist
Her ringlets round her fingers, saying:
'Youth !

Too long, alas, hast thou starved on the
ruth,

The bitterness of love: too long indeed,
Seeing thou art so gentle. Could I weed
Thy soul of care, by heavens, I would offer
All the bright riches of my crystal coffer
To Amphitrite; all my clear-eyed fish,
Golden, or rainbow-sided, or purplish, 110
Vermilion-tail'd, or finn'd with silvery
gauze;

Yea, or my veined pebble-floor, that draws
A virgin light to the deep; my grotto-sands,
Tawny and gold, oozed slowly from far
lands

By my diligent springs: my level lilies,
shells,

My charming rod, my potent river spells;
Yes, every thing, even to the pearly cup
Meander gave me, — for I bubbled up
To fainting creatures in a desert wild.

But woe is me, I am but as a child 120
To gladden thee; and all I dare to say,
Is, that I pity thee; that on this day
I've been thy guide; that thou must wander
far

In other regions, past the scanty bar
To mortal steps, before thou canst be ta'en
From every wasting sigh, from every pain,
Into the gentle bosom of thy love.

Why it is thus, one knows in heaven above:
But, a poor Naiad, I guess not. Farewell !
I have a ditty for my hollow cell.' 130

Hereat she vanish'd from Endymion's
gaze,

Who brooded o'er the water in amaze:
The dashing fount pour'd on, and where
its pool

Lay, half asleep, in grass and rushes cool,
Quick waterflies and gnats were sporting
still,

And fish were dimpling, as if good nor ill
Had fallen out that hour. The wanderer,
Holding his forehead, to keep off the burr
Of smothering fancies, patiently sat down;
And, while beneath the evening's sleepy
frown 140

Glowworms began to trim their starry
lamps,

Thus breathed he to himself: 'Whoso en-
camps

To take a fancied city of delight,
O what a wretch is he ! and when 't is his,
After long toil and travelling, to miss
The kernel of his hopes, how more than
vile :

Yet, for him there's refreshment even in
toil:

Another city doth he set about,
Free from the smallest pebble-bead of
doubt 149

That he will seize on trickling honey-combs:
Alas, he finds them dry; and then he foams,
And onward to another city speeds.

But this is human life: the war, the deeds,
The disappointment, the anxiety,
Imagination's struggles, far and nigh,
All human; bearing in themselves this good,
That they are still the air, the subtle food,
To make us feel existence, and to show
How quiet death is. Where soil is, men
grow, 159

Whether to weeds or flowers; but for me,
There is no depth to strike in: I can see
Naught earthly worth my compassing; so
stand

Upon a misty, jutting head of land —
Alone ? No, no; and by the Orphean lute,
When mad Eurydice is listening to't,
I'd rather stand upon this misty peak,
With not a thing to sigh for, or to seek,

But the soft shadow of my thrice seen love,
Than be — I care not what. O meekest
dove

Of heaven! O Cynthia, ten-times bright
and fair! 170

From thy blue throne, now filling all the
air,

Glance but one little beam of temper'd
light

Into my bosom, that the dreadful might
And tyranny of love be somewhat scared!
Yet do not so, sweet queen; one torment
spared,

Would give a pang to jealous misery,
Worse than the torment's self: but rather
tie

Large wings upon my shoulders, and point
out

My love's far dwelling. Though the play-
ful rout 179

Of Cupids shun thee, too divine art thou,
Too keen in beauty, for thy silver prow
Not to have dipp'd in love's most gentle
stream.

O be propitious, nor severely deem
My madness impious; for, by all the stars
That tend thy bidding, I do think the bars
That kept my spirit in are burst — that I
Am sailing with thee through the dizzy
sky!

How beautiful thou art! The world how
deep!

How tremulous-dazzlingly the wheels sweep
Around their axle! Then these gleaming
reins, 190

How lithe! When this thy chariot attains
Its airy goal, haply some bower veils
Those twilight eyes? Those eyes! — my
spirit fails —

Dear goddess, help! or the wide gaping
air

Will gulf me — help! — At this, with
madden'd stare,

And lifted hands, and trembling lips, he
stood;

Like old Deucalion mountain'd o'er the
floor,

Or blind Orion hungry for the morn.

And, but from the deep cavern there was
borne

A voice, he had been froze to senseless
stone; 200

Nor sigh of his, nor plaint, nor passion'd
moan

Had more been heard. Thus swell'd it
forth: 'Descend,

Young mountaineer! descend where alleys
bend

Into the sparry hollows of the world!

Oft hast thou seen bolts of the thunder
hurl'd

As from thy threshold; day by day hast
been

A little lower than the chilly sheen
Of icy pinnacles, and dipp'dst thine arms
Into the deadening ether that still charms
Their marble being: now, as deep pro-
found

As those are high, descend! He ne'er is
crown'd 211

With immortality, who fears to follow
Where airy voices lead: so through the
hollow,

The silent mysteries of earth, descend!'

He heard but the last words, nor could
contend

One moment in reflection: for he fled
Into the fearful deep, to hide his head
From the clear moon, the trees, and com-
ing madness.

'T was far too strange, and wonderful
for sadness;

Sharpening, by degrees, his appetite 220
To dive into the deepest. Dark, nor light,
The region; nor bright, nor sombre wholly,
But mingled up; a gleaming melancholy;
A dusky empire and its diadems;
One faint eternal eventide of gems.

Aye, millions sparkled on a vein of gold,
Along whose track the prince quick foot-
steps told,

With all its lines abrupt and angular:
Out-shooting sometimes, like a meteor-star,
Through a vast antre; then the metal woof,

Like Vulcan's rainbow, with some monstrous roof 231
 Curves hugely: now, far in the deep abyss,
 It seems an angry lightning, and doth hiss
 Fancy into belief: anon it leads
 Through winding passages, where sameness
 breeds
 Vexing conceptions of some sudden change;
 Whether to silver grotts, or giant range
 Of sapphire columns, or fantastic bridge
 Athwart a flood of crystal. On a ridge
 Now fareth he, that o'er the vast beneath
 Towers like an ocean-cliff, and whence he
 seeth 241
 A hundred waterfalls, whose voices come
 But as the murmuring surge. Chilly and
 numb
 His bosom grew, when first he, far away,
 Descried an orb'd diamond, set to fray
 Old Darkness from his throne: 't was like
 the sun
 Uprisen o'er chaos: and with such a stun
 Came the amazement, that, absorb'd in it,
 He saw not fiercer wonders — past the
 wit
 Of any spirit to tell, but one of those 250
 Who, when this planet's sphering time doth
 close
 Will be its high remembrancers: who they?
 The mighty ones who have made eternal
 day
 For Greece and England. While astonish-
 ment
 With deep-drawn sighs was quieting, he
 went
 Into a marble gallery, passing through
 A mimic temple, so complete and true
 In sacred custom, that he well nigh fear'd
 To search it inwards; whence far off ap-
 pear'd,
 Through a long pillar'd vista, a fair shrine,
 And, just beyond, on light tiptoe divine, 261
 A quiver'd Dian. Stepping awfully,
 The youth approach'd; oft turning his
 veil'd eye
 Down sidelong aisles, and into niches old:
 And when, more near against the marble
 cold

He had touch'd his forehead, he began to
 thread
 All courts and passages, where silence dead,
 Roused by his whispering footsteps, mur-
 mur'd faint:
 And long he traversed to and fro, to ac-
 quaint
 Himself with every mystery, and awe; 270
 Till, weary, he sat down before the maw
 Of a wide outlet, fathomless and dim,
 To wild uncertainty and shadows grim.
 There, when new wonders ceased to float
 before,
 And thoughts of self came on, how crude
 and sore
 The journey homeward to habitual self!
 A mad pursuing of the fog-born elf,
 Whose flitting lantern, through rude nettle-
 brier,
 Cheats us into a swamp, into a fire,
 Into the bosom of a hated thing. 280

What misery most drowningly doth sing
 In lone Endymion's ear, now he has raught
 The goal of consciousness? Ah, 't is the
 thought,
 The deadly feel of solitude: for lo!
 He cannot see the heavens, nor the flow
 Of rivers, nor hill-flowers running wild
 In pink and purple chequer, nor, up-piled,
 The cloudy rack slow journeying in the
 west,
 Like herded elephants; nor felt, nor prest
 Cool grass, nor tasted the fresh slumberous
 air; 290
 But far from such companionship to wear
 An unknown time, surcharged with grief,
 away,
 Was now his lot. And must he patient stay,
 Tracing fantastic figures with his spear?
 'No!' exclaim'd he, 'why should I tarry
 here?'
 No! loudly echoed times innumerable.
 At which he straightway started, and 'gan
 tell
 His paces back into the temple's chief;
 Warming and glowing strong in the belief
 Of help from Dian: so that when again 300

He caught her airy form, thus did he plain,
 Moving more near the while: 'O Haunter
 chaste
 Of river sides, and woods, and heathy
 waste,
 Where with thy silver bow and arrows keen
 Art thou now forested? O woodland
 Queen,
 What smoothest air thy smoother forehead
 woos?
 Where dost thou listen to the wide halloos
 Of thy departed nymphs? Through what
 dark tree
 Glimmers thy crescent? Wheresoe'er it be,
 'Tis in the breath of heaven: thou dost
 taste 310
 Freedom as none can taste it, nor dost
 waste
 Thy loveliness in dismal elements;
 But, finding in our green earth sweet con-
 tents,
 There livest blissfully. Ah, if to thee
 It feels Elysian, how rich to me,
 An exiled mortal, sounds its pleasant name!
 Within my breast there lives a choking
 flame—
 O let me cool 't the zephyr-boughs among!
 A homeward fever parches up my tongue—
 O let me slake it at the running springs! 320
 Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings—
 O let me once more hear the linnet's note!
 Before mine eyes thick films and shadows
 float—
 O let me 'noint them with the heaven's
 light!
 Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles
 white?
 O think how sweet to me the freshening
 sluice!
 Dost thou now please thy thirst with berry-
 juice?
 O think how this dry palate would rejoice!
 If in soft slumber thou dost hear my voice,
 O think how I should love a bed of
 flowers!— 330
 Young goddess! let me see my native
 bowers!
 Deliver me from this rapacious deep!

Thus ending loudly, as he would o'er-
 leap
 His destiny, alert he stood: but when
 Obstinate silence came heavily again,
 Feeling about for its old couch of space
 And airy cradle, lowly bow'd his face,
 Desponding, o'er the marble floor's cold
 thrill.
 But 't was not long; for, sweeter than the
 rill
 To its old channel, or a swollen tide 340
 To margin shallows, were the leaves he spied,
 And flowers, and wreaths, and ready myrtle
 crowns
 Upheaping through the slab: refreshment
 drowns
 Itself, and strives its own delights to hide—
 Nor in one spot alone; the floral pride
 In a long whispering birth enchanted grew
 Before his footsteps; as when heaved anew
 Old ocean rolls a lengthened wave to the
 shore,
 Down whose green back the short-lived
 foam, all hoar,
 Bursts gradual, with a wayward indo-
 lence. 350
 Increasing still in heart, and pleasant
 sense,
 Upon his fairy journey on he hastes;
 So anxious for the end, he scarcely wastes
 One moment with his hand among the
 sweets:
 Onward he goes—he stops—his bosom
 beats
 As plainly in his ear, as the faint charm
 Of which the throbs were born. This still
 alarm,
 This sleepy music, forced him walk tip-
 toe:
 For it came more softly than the east could
 blow
 Arion's magic to the Atlantic isles; 360
 Or than the west, made jealous by the
 smiles
 Of throned Apollo, could breathe back the
 lyre
 To seas Ionian and Tyrian.

O did he ever live, that lonely man,
Who loved—and music slew not? 'Tis
the pest

Of love, that fairest joys give most unrest;
That things of delicate and tenderest worth
Are swallow'd all, and made a seared
dearth,

By one consuming flame: it doth immerse
And suffocate true blessings in a curse. 370
Half-happy, by comparison of bliss,
Is miserable. 'T was even so with this
Dew-dropping melody, in the Carian's
ear;

First heaven, then hell, and then forgotten
clear,

Vanish'd in elemental passion.

And down some swart abysm he had
gone,

Had not a heavenly guide benignant led
To where thick myrtle branches, 'gainst
his head

Brushing, awakened: then the sounds again
Went noiseless as a passing noontide
rain 380

Over a bower, where little space he stood;
For as the sunset peeps into a wood,
So saw he panting light, and towards it
went

Through winding alleys; and lo, wonder-
ment!

Upon soft verdure saw, one here, one there,
Cupids a-slumbering on their pinions fair.

After a thousand mazes overgone,
At last, with sudden step, he came upon
A chamber, myrtle-wall'd, embower'd high,
Full of light, incense, tender minstrelsy, 390
And more of beautiful and strange beside:
For on a silken couch of rosy pride,
In midst of all, there lay a sleeping youth
Of fondest beauty; fonder, in fair sooth,
Than sighs could fathom, or contentment
reach:

And coverlids gold-tinted like the peach,
Or ripe October's faded marigolds,
Fell sleek about him in a thousand folds—
Not hiding up an Apollonian curve

Of neck and shoulder, nor the tenting
swerve 400

Of knee from knee, nor ankles pointing
light;

But rather, giving them to the fill'd sight
Officiously. Sideway his face reposed
On one white arm, and tenderly unclosed,
By tenderest pressure, a faint damask
mouth

To slumb'ry pout; just as the morning
south

Disparts a dew-lipp'd rose. Above his
head,

Four lily stalks did their white honours
wed

To make a coronal; and round him grew
All tendrils green, of every bloom and
hue, 410

Together intertwined and trammell'd fresh:
The vine of glossy sprout; the ivy mesh,
Shading its Ethiop berries; and woodbine,
Of velvet-leaves and bugle-blooms divine;
Convolvulus in streaked vases flush;
The creeper, mellowing for an autumn
blush;

And virgin's bower, trailing airily;
With others of the sisterhood. Hard by,
Stood serene Cupids watching silently.

One, kneeling to a lyre, touch'd the
strings, 420

Muffling to death the pathos with his wings;
And, ever and anon, uprose to look
At the youth's slumber; while another took
A willow bough, distilling odorous dew,
And shook it on his hair; another flew
In through the woven roof, and fluttering-
wise

Rain'd violets upon his sleeping eyes.

At these enchantments, and yet many
more,

The breathless Latmian wonder'd o'er and
o'er;

Until impatient in embarrassment, 430
He forthright pass'd, and lightly treading
went

To that same feather'd lyrist, who straight-
way,

Smiling, thus whisper'd: 'Though from
upper day

Thou art a wanderer, and thy presence
here

Might seem unholy, be of happy cheer !
For 't is the nicest touch of human honour,
When some ethereal and high-favouring
donor

Presents immortal bowers to mortal sense;
As now 't is done to thee, Endymion. Hence
Was I in no wise startled. So recline ⁴⁴⁰
Upon these living flowers. Here is wine,

Alive with sparkles — never, I aver,
Since Ariadne was a vintager,

So cool a purple: taste these juicy pears,
Sent me by sad Vertumnus, when his fears
Were high about Pomona: here is cream,
Deepening to richness from a snowy gleam;
Sweeter than that nurse Amalthea skimm'd

For the boy Jupiter: and here, undimm'd
By any touch, a bunch of blooming plums
Ready to melt between an infant's gums:
And here is manna pick'd from Syrian
trees, ⁴⁵²

In starlight, by the three Hesperides.

Feast on, and meanwhile I will let thee
know

Of all these things around us.' He did
so,

Still brooding o'er the cadence of his lyre;
And thus: 'I need not any hearing tire
By telling how the sea-born goddess pined
For a mortal youth, and how she strove to
bind

Him all in unto her doating self. ⁴⁶⁰
Who would not be so prison'd ? but, fond
elf,

He was content to let her amorous plea
Faint through his careless arms; content to
see

An unseized heaven dying at his feet;
Content, O fool ! to make a cold retreat,
When on the pleasant grass such love, love-
lorn,

Lay sorrowing; when every tear was born
Of diverse passion; when her lips and eyes
Were closed in sullen moisture, and quick
sighs

Came vex'd and pettish through her nos-
trils small. ⁴⁷⁰

Hush ! no exclaim — yet, justly might'st
thou call

Curses upon his head. — I was half glad,
But my poor mistress went distract and
mad,

When the boar tusk'd him: so away she flew
To Jove's high throne, and by her plainings
drew

Immortal tear-drops down the thunderer's
beard;

Whereon, it was decreed he should be
rear'd

Each summer-time to life. Lo ! this is he,
That same Adonis, safe in the privacy
Of this still region all his winter-sleep. ⁴⁸⁰
Aye, sleep; for when our love-sick queen
did weep

Over his waned corse, the tremulous
shower

Heal'd up the wound, and, with a balmy
power,

Medicined death to a lengthened drowsi-
ness:

The which she fills with visions, and doth
dress

In all this quiet luxury; and hath set
Us young immortals, without any let,
To watch his slumber through. 'T is well
nigh pass'd,

Even to a moment's filling up, and fast
She scuds with summer breezes, to pant
through ⁴⁹⁰

The first long kiss, warm firstling, to renew
Embower'd sports in Cytherea's isle.

Look! how those winged listeners all this
while

Stand anxious: see ! behold !' — This cla-
mant word

Broke through the careful silence; for
they heard

A rustling noise of leaves, and out there
flutter'd

Pigeons and doves: Adonis something
mutter'd,

The while one hand, that erst upon his
thigh

Lay dormant, moved convulsed and gradu-
ally
Up to his forehead. Then there was a
hum 500
Of sudden voices, echoing, 'Come! come!
Arise! awake! Clear summer has forth
walk'd
Unto the clover-sward, and she has talk'd
Full soothingly to every nested finch:
Rise, Cupids! or we'll give the bluebell
pinch
To your dimpled arms. Once more sweet
life begin!'
At this, from every side they hurried in,
Rubbing their sleepy eyes with lazy wrists,
And doubling overhead their little fists.
In backward yawns. But all were soon
alive: 510
For, as delicious wine doth, sparkling, dive
In nectar'd clouds and curls through water
fair,
So from the harbour roof down swell'd an air
Odorous and enlivening; making all
To laugh, and play, and sing, and loudly call
For their sweet queen: when lo! the
wreathed green
Disparted, and far upward could be seen
Blue heaven, and a silver car, air-borne,
Whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds
of morn,
Spun off a drizzling dew, — which falling
chill 520
On soft Adonis' shoulders, made him still
Nestle and turn uneasily about.
Soon were the white doves plain, with necks
stretch'd out,
And silken traces lighten'd in descent;
And soon, returning from love's banish-
ment,
Queen Venus leaning downward open-
arm'd:
Her shadow fell upon his breast, and
charm'd
A tumult to his heart, and a new life
Into his eyes. Ah, miserable strife,
But for her comforting! unhappy sight, 530
But meeting her blue orbs! Who, who
can write

Of these first minutes? The unchariest
muse
To embracements warm as theirs makes
coy excuse.

O it has ruffled every spirit there,
Saving Love's self, who stands superb to
share

The general gladness: awfully he stands;
A sovereign quell is in his waving hands;
No sight can bear the lightning of his bow;
His quiver is mysterious, none can know
What themselves think of it; from forth
his eyes 540

There darts strange light of varied hues
and dyes:

A scowl is sometimes on his brow, but who
Look full upon it feel anon the blue
Of his fair eyes run liquid through their
souls.

Endymion feels it, and no more controls
The burning prayer within him; so, bent
low,

He had begun a plaining of his woe.
But Venus, bending forward, said: 'My
child,

Favour this gentle youth; his days are wild
With love — he — but alas! too well I see
Thou know'st the deepness of his misery.
Ah, smile not so, my son: I tell thee true,
That when through heavy hours I used to
rue 553

The endless sleep of this new-born Adon',
This stranger ay I pitied. For upon
A dreary morning once I fled away
Into the breezy clouds, to weep and pray
For this my love: for vexing Mars had
teased

Me even to tears: thence, when a little
eased,

Down-looking, vacant, through a hazy wood,
I saw this youth as he despairing stood: 561
Those same dark curls blown vagrant in
the wind;

Those same full fringed lids a constant
blind

Over his sullen eyes: I saw him throw
Himself on wither'd leaves, even as though

Death had come sudden; for no jot he moved,
 Yet mutter'd wildly. I could hear he loved
 Some fair immortal, and that his embrace
 Had zoned her through the night. There
 is no trace
 Of this in heaven: I have mark'd each
 cheek, 570
 And find it is the vainest thing to seek;
 And that of all things 't is kept secretest.
 Endymion! one day thou wilt be blest:
 So still obey the guiding hand that fends
 Thee safely through these wonders for
 sweet ends.
 'T is a concealment needful in extreme;
 And if I guess'd not so, the sunny beam
 Thou shouldst mount up with me. Now
 adieu!
 Here must we leave thee.' — At these
 words upflew
 The impatient doves, uprose the floating
 car, 580
 Up went the hum celestial. High afar
 The Latmian saw them minish into naught;
 And, when all were clear vanish'd, still he
 caught
 A vivid lightning from that dreadful bow.
 When all was darken'd, with Ætnean throe
 The earth closed — gave a solitary moan —
 And left him once again in twilight lone.

He did not rave, he did not stare aghast,
 For all those visions were o'ergone, and
 past,
 And he in loneliness: he felt assured 590
 Of happy times, when all he had endured
 Would seem a feather to the mighty prize.
 So, with unusual gladness, on he hies
 Through caves, and palaces of mottled
 ore,
 Gold dome, and crystal wall, and turquois
 floor,
 Black polish'd porticos of awful shade,
 And, at the last, a diamond balustrade,
 Leading afar past wild magnificence,
 Spiral through ruggèd loopholes, and
 thence
 Stretching across a void, then guiding o'er

Enormous chasms, where, all foam and
 roar, 601
 Streams subterranean tease their granite
 beds;
 Then heighten'd just above the silvery heads
 Of a thousand fountains, so that he could
 dash
 The waters with his spear; but at the
 splash,
 Done heedlessly, those spouting columns
 rose
 Sudden a poplar's height, and 'gan to en-
 close
 His diamond path with fretwork, streaming
 round
 Alive, and dazzling cool, and with a sound,
 Haply, like dolphin tumults, when sweet
 shells 610
 Welcome the float of Thetis. Long he
 dwells
 On this delight; for, every minute's space,
 The streams with changed magic interlace:
 Sometimes like delicatest lattices,
 Cover'd with crystal vines; then weeping
 trees,
 Moving about as in a gentle wind,
 Which, in a wink, to watery gauze refined,
 Pour'd into shapes of curtain'd canopies,
 Spangled, and rich with liquid broideries
 Of flowers, peacocks, swans, and naiads
 fair. 620
 Swifter than lightning went these wonders
 rare;
 And then the water, into stubborn streams
 Collecting, mimick'd the wrought oaken
 beams,
 Pillars, and frieze, and high fantastic roof,
 Of those dusk places in times far aloof
 Cathedrals call'd. He bade a loth fare-
 well
 To these founts Protean, passing gulf, and
 dell,
 And torrent, and ten thousand jutting
 shapes,
 Half seen through deepest gloom, and
 griesly gapes,
 Blackening on every side, and overhead 630
 A vaulted dome like Heaven's, far bespread

With starlight gems: aye, all so huge and strange,

The solitary felt a hurried change
Working within him into something dreary, —

Vex'd like a morning eagle, lost, and weary,
And purblind amid foggy, midnight wolds.
But he revives at once: for who beholds
New sudden things, nor casts his mental slough?

Forth from a rugged arch, in the dusk below, 639

Came mother Cybele! alone — alone —
In sombre chariot; dark foldings thrown
About her majesty, and front death-pale,
With turrets crown'd. Four maned lions hale

The sluggish wheels; solemn their toothed maws,

Their surly eyes brow-hidden, heavy paws
Uplifted drowsily, and nervy tails
Cowering their tawny brushes. Silent sails
This shadowy queen athwart, and faints away

In another gloomy arch.

Wherefore delay,

Young traveller, in such a mournful place?
Art thou wayworn, or canst not further trace 651

The diamond path? And does it indeed end

Abrupt in middle air? Yet earthward bend

Thy forehead, and to Jupiter cloud-borne
Call ardently! He was indeed wayworn;
Abrupt, in middle air, his way was lost;
To cloud-borne Jove he bowed, and there crost

Towards him a large eagle, 'twixt whose wings,

Without one impious word, himself he flings,

Committed to the darkness and the gloom:
Down, down, uncertain to what pleasant doom, 661

Swift as a fathoming plummet down he fell

Through unknown things; till exhaled asphodel,

And rose, with spicy fannings interbreathed,
Came swelling forth where little caves were wreathed

So thick with leaves and mosses, that they seem'd

Large honeycombs of green, and freshly teen'd

With airs delicious. In the greenest nook
The eagle landed him, and farewell took.

It was a jasmine bower, all bestrown 673
With golden moss. His every sense had grown

Ethereal for pleasure; 'bove his head
Flew a delight half-graspable; his tread

Was Hesperian; to his capable ears
Silence was music from the holy spheres;

A dewy luxury was in his eyes;
The little flowers felt his pleasant sighs

And stirr'd them faintly. Verdant cave and cell

He wander'd through, oft wondering at such swell

Of sudden exaltation: but, 'Alas!' 680
Said he, 'will all this gush of feeling pass

Away in solitude? And must they wane,
Like melodies upon a sandy plain,

Without an echo? Then shall I be left
So sad, so melancholy, so bereft!

Yet still I feel immortal! O my love,
My breath of life, where art thou? High above,

Dancing before the morning gates of heaven?

Or keeping watch among those starry seven,
Old Atlas' children? Art a maid of the waters, 690

One of shell-winding Triton's bright-hair'd daughters?

Or art, impossible! a nymph of Dian's,
Weaving a coronal of tender scions

For very idleness? Where'er thou art,
Methinks it now is at my will to start

Into thine arms; to scare Aurora's train,
And snatch thee from the morning; o'er the main

To scud like a wild bird, and take thee off
From thy sea-foamy cradle; or to doff
Thy shepherd vest, and woo thee 'mid
fresh leaves. 700

No, no, too eagerly my soul deceives
Its powerless self: I know this cannot be.
O let me then by some sweet dreaming
flee

To her entrancements: hither sleep awhile !
Hither most gentle sleep ! and soothing foil
For some few hours the coming solitude.'

Thus spake he, and that moment felt
endued

With power to dream deliciously; so wound
Through a dim passage, searching till he
found

The smoothest mossy bed and deepest,
where 710

He threw himself, and just into the air
Stretching his indolent arms, he took, O
bliss !

A naked waist: 'Fair Cupid, whence is
this ?'

A well-known voice sigh'd, 'Sweetest,
here am I !'

At which soft ravishment, with doting cry
They trembled to each other. — Helicon !
O fountain'd hill ! Old Homer's Helicon !
That thou wouldst spout a little streamlet
o'er

These sorry pages; then the verse would
soar

And sing above this gentle pair, like lark
Over his nested young: but all is dark 721
Around thine aged top, and thy clear fount
Exhales in mists to heaven. Aye, the count
Of mighty Poets is made up; the scroll
Is folded by the Muses; the bright roll
Is in Apollo's hand: our dazed eyes

Have seen a new tinge in the western skies:
The world has done its duty. Yet, oh yet,
Although the sun of poesy is set,
These lovers did embrace, and we must
weep 730

That there is no old power left to steep
A quill immortal in their joyous tears.
Long time in silence did their anxious fears

Question that thus it was; long time they
lay

Fondling and kissing every doubt away;
Long time ere soft caressing sobs began
To mellow into words, and then there ran
Two bubbling springs of talk from their
sweet lips.

'O known Unknown ! from whom my be-
ing sips 739

Such darling essence, wherefore may I not
Be ever in these arms ? in this sweet spot
Pillow my chin for ever ? ever press
These toying hands and kiss their smooth
excess ?

Why not for ever and for ever feel
That breath about my eyes ? Ah, thou wilt
steal

Away from me again, indeed, indeed —
Thou wilt be gone away, and wilt not heed
My lonely madness. Speak, delicious fair
Is — is it to be so ? No ! Who will dare
To pluck thee from me ? And, of thine
own will, 750

Full well I feel thou wouldst not leave me.
Still

Let me entwine thee surer, surer — now
How can we part ? Elysium ! Who art
thou ?

Who, that thou canst not be for ever here,
Or lift me with thee to some starry sphere ?
Enchantress ! tell me by this soft embrace,
By the most soft completion of thy face,
Those lips, O slippery blisses, twinkling
eyes,

And by these tenderest, milky sovereign-
ties —

These tenderest, and by the nectar-wine,
The passion' ——— 'O doved Ida the di-
vine ! 761

Endymion ! dearest ! Ah, unhappy me !
His soul will 'scape us — O felicity !
How he does love me ! His poor temples
beat

To the very tune of love — how sweet,
sweet, sweet.

Revive, dear youth, or I shall faint and
die;

Revive, or these soft hours will hurry by

In tranced dullness; speak, and let that spell
 Affright this lethargy! I cannot quell
 Its heavy pressure, and will press at least
 My lips to thine, that they may richly feast 771
 Until we taste the life of love again.
 What! dost thou move? dost kiss? O bliss! O pain!
 I love thee, youth, more than I can conceive;
 And so long absence from thee doth bereave
 My soul of any rest: yet must I hence:
 Yet, can I not to starry eminence
 Uplift thee; nor for very shame can own
 Myself to thee. Ah, dearest, do not groan
 Or thou wilt force me from this secrecy, 780
 And I must blush in heaven. O that I
 Had done it already; that the dreadful smiles
 At my lost brightness, my impassion'd wiles,
 Had waned from Olympus' solemn height,
 And from all serious Gods; that our delight
 Was quite forgotten, save of us alone!
 And wherefore so ashamed? 'Tis but to atone
 For endless pleasure, by some coward blushes:
 Yet must I be a coward! — Honour rushes
 Too palpable before me — the sad look 790
 Of Jove — Minerva's start — no bosom shook
 With awe of purity — no Cupid pinion
 In reverence veiled — my crystalline dominion
 Half lost, and all old hymns made nullity!
 But what is this to love? O I could fly
 With thee into the ken of heavenly powers,
 So thou wouldst thus, for many sequent hours,
 Press me so sweetly. Now I swear at once
 That I am wise, that Pallas is a dunce —

Perhaps her love like mine is but unknown — 800
 O I do think that I have been alone
 In chastity: yes, Pallas has been sighing,
 While every eve saw me my hair uptying
 With fingers cool as aspen leaves. Sweet love,
 I was as vague as solitary dove,
 Nor knew that nests were built. Now a soft kiss —
 Aye, by that kiss, I vow an endless bliss,
 An immortality of passion's thine:
 Ere long I will exalt thee to the shine
 Of heaven ambrosial; and we will shade 810
 Ourselves whole summers by a river glade;
 And I will tell thee stories of the sky,
 And breathe thee whispers of its minstrelsy.
 My happy love will overwing all bounds!
 O let me melt into thee; let the sounds
 Of our close voices marry at their birth;
 Let us entwine hoveringly — O dearth
 Of human words! roughness of mortal speech!
 Lisping empyrean will I sometime teach
 Thine honey'd tongue — lute-breathings, which I gasp 820
 To have thee understand, now while I clasp
 Thee thus, and weep for fondness — I am pain'd,
 Endymion: woe! woe! is grief contain'd
 In the very deeps of pleasure, my sole life? —
 Hereat, with many sobs, her gentle strife
 Melted into a languor. He return'd
 Entranced vows and tears.

Ye who have yearn'd
 With too much passion, will here stay and pity,
 For the mere sake of truth; as 't is a ditty
 Not of these days, but long ago 't was told
 By a cavern wind unto a forest old; 831
 And then the forest told it in a dream
 To a sleeping lake, whose cool and level gleam
 A poet caught as he was journeying
 To Phœbus' shrine; and in it he did fling

His weary limbs, bathing an hour's space,
And after, straight in that inspired place
He sang the story up into the air,
Giving it universal freedom. There
Has it been ever sounding for those ears ⁸⁴⁰
Whose tips are glowing hot. The legend
cheers

Yon sentinel stars; and he who listens
to it

Must surely be self-doom'd or he will
rue it:

For quenchless burnings come upon the
heart,

Made fiercer by a fear lest any part
Should be engulfed in the eddying wind.

As much as here is penn'd doth always
find

A resting-place, thus much comes clear and
plain;

Anon the strange voice is upon the wane —
And 't is but echoed from departing sound,
That the fair visitant at last unwound ⁸⁵¹

Her gentle limbs, and left the youth
asleep. —

Thus the tradition of the gusty deep.

Now turn we to our former chroni-
clers. —

Endymion awoke, that grief of hers
Sweet paining on his ear: he sickly guess'd
How lone he was once more, and sadly
press'd

His empty arms together, hung his head,
And most forlorn upon that widow'd bed
Sat silently. Love's madness he had
known: ⁸⁶⁰

Often with more than tortured lion's groan
Moanings had burst from him; but now
that rage

Had pass'd away: no longer did he wage
A rough-voiced war against the dooming
stars.

No, he had felt too much for such harsh
jars:

The lyre of his soul Æolian tuned
Forgot all violence, and but communed
With melancholy thought: O he had
swoon'd

Drunken from pleasure's nipple; and his
love

Henceforth was dove-like. — Loth was he
to move ⁸⁷⁰

From the imprinted couch, and when he
did,

'T was with slow, languid paces, and face
hid

In muffling hands. So temper'd, out he
stray'd

Half seeing visions that might have dis-
may'd

Alecto's serpents; ravishments more keen
Than Hermes' pipe, when anxious he did
lean

Over eclipsing eyes: and at the last

It was a sounding grotto, vaulted, vast,
O'erstudied with a thousand, thousand
pearls,

And crimson-mouthed shells with stubborn
curls, ⁸⁸⁰

Of every shape and size, even to the bulk
In which whales harbour close, to brood
and sulk

Against an endless storm. Moreover too,
Fish-semblances, of green and azure hue,
Ready to snort their streams. In this cool
wonder

Endymion sat down, and 'gan to ponder
On all his life: his youth, up to the day
When 'mid acclaim, and feasts, and gar-
lands gay,

He stept upon his shepherd throne: the look
Of his white palace in wild forest nook, ⁸⁹⁰
And all the revels he had lorded there:

Each tender maiden whom he once thought
fair,

With every friend and fellow-woodlander —
Pass'd like a dream before him. Then the
spur

Of the old bards to mighty deeds: his plans
To nurse the golden age 'mong shepherd
clans:

That wondrous night: the great Pan-festi-
val:

His sister's sorrow; and his wanderings all,
Until into the earth's deep maw he rush'd:
Then all its buried magic, till it flush'd ⁹⁰⁰

High with excessive love. 'And now,'
thought he,
'How long must I remain in jeopardy
Of blank amazements that amaze no more?
Now I have tasted her sweet soul to the
core,

All other depths are shallow: essences,
Once spiritual, are like muddy lees,
Meant but to fertilize my earthly root,
And make my branches lift a golden fruit
Into the bloom of heaven: other light,
Though it be quick and sharp enough to
blight 910

The Olympian eagle's vision, is dark,
Dark as the parentage of chaos. Hark!
My silent thoughts are echoing from these
shells;

Or they are but the ghosts, the dying swells
Of noises far away? — list! — Hereupon
He kept an anxious ear. The humming
tone

Came louder, and behold, there as he lay,
On either side outgush'd, with misty spray,
A copious spring; and both together dash'd
Swift, mad, fantastic round the rocks, and
lash'd 920

Among the conchs and shells of the lofty
grot,

Leaving a trickling dew. At last they
shot

Down from the ceiling's height, pouring a
noise

As of some breathless racers whose hopes
poise

Upon the last few steps, and with spent
force

Along the ground they took a winding
course.

Endymion follow'd — for it seem'd that
one

Ever pursued, the other strove to shun —
Follow'd their languid mazes, till well nigh
He had left thinking of the mystery, — 930

And was now rapt in tender hoverings
Over the vanish'd bliss. Ah! what is it
sings

His dream away? What melodies are
these?

They sound as through the whispering of
trees,
Not native in such barren vaults. Give
ear!

'O Arethusa, peerless nymph! why fear
Such tenderness as mine? Great Dian,
why,

Why didst thou hear her prayer? O that I
Were rippling round her dainty fairness
now, 939

Circling about her waist, and striving how
To entice her to a dive! then stealing in
Between her luscious lips and eyelids thin.
O that her shining hair was in the sun,
And I distilling from it thence to run
In amorous rillets down her shrinking form!
To linger on her lily shoulders, warm
Between her kissing breasts, and every
charm

Touch raptured! — see how painfully I
flow:

Fair maid, be pitiful to my great woe.
Stay, stay thy weary course, and let me
lead, 950

A happy wooer, to the flowery mead
Where all that beauty snared me.' —
'Cruel god,

Desist! or my offended mistress' nod
Will stagnate all thy fountains: — tease me
not

With siren words — Ah, have I really got
Such power to madden thee? And is it
true —

Away, away, or I shall dearly rue
My very thoughts: in mercy then away,
Kindest Alpheus, for should I obey 959
My own dear will, 't would be a deadly
bane.'

'O, Oread-Queen! would that thou hadst a
pain

Like this of mine, then would I fearless
turn

And be a criminal.' 'Alas, I burn,
I shudder — gentle river, get thee hence.
Alpheus! thou enchanter! every sense
Of mine was once made perfect in these
woods.

Fresh breezes, bowery lawns, and innocent
floods,
Ripe fruits, and lonely couch, contentment
gave;
But ever since I heedlessly did lave
In thy deceitful stream, a panting glow ⁹⁷⁰
Grew strong within me: wherefore serve
me so,
And call it love? Alas! 't was cruelty.
Not once more did I close my happy eye
Amid the thrush's song. Away! avaunt!
O 't was a cruel thing.' — 'Now thou dost
taunt
So softly, Arethusa, that I think
If thou wast playing on my shady brink,
Thou wouldst bathe once again. Innocent
maid!
Stifle thine heart no more; — nor be afraid
Of angry powers: there are deities ⁹⁸⁰
Will shade us with their wings. Those
fitful sighs
'T is almost death to hear: O let me pour
A dewy balm upon them! — fear no more,
Sweet Arethusa! Dian's self must feel
Sometimes these very pangs. Dear maiden,
steal
Blushing into my soul, and let us fly
These dreary caverns for the open sky.
I will delight thee all my winding course,
From the green sea up to my hidden source
About Arcadian forests; and will show ⁹⁹⁰
The channels where my coolest waters flow
Through mossy rocks; where 'mid exuber-
ant green,
I roam in pleasant darkness, more unseen
Than Saturn in his exile; where I brim
Round flowery islands, and take thence a
skim
Of mealy sweets, which myriads of bees
Buzz from their honey'd wings: and thou
shouldst please
Thyself to choose the richest, where we
might
Be incense-pillow'd every summer night.
Doff all sad fears, thou white deliciousness,
And let us be thus comforted; unless ¹⁰⁰¹
Thou couldst rejoice to see my hopeless
stream

Hurry distracted from Sol's temperate
beam,
And pour to death along some hungry
sands.' —
'What can I do, Alpheus? Dian stands
Severe before me: persecuting fate!
Unhappy Arethusa! thou wast late
A huntress free in' — At this, sudden
fell
Those two sad streams adown a fearful
dell.
The Latmian listen'd, but he heard no
more, ¹⁰¹⁰
Save echo, faint repeating o'er and o'er
The name of Arethusa. On the verge
Of that dark gulf he wept, and said: 'I
urge
Thee, gentle Goddess of my pilgrimage,
By our eternal hopes, to soothe, to assuage,
If thou art powerful, these lovers' pains;
And make them happy in some happy
plains.'

He turn'd — there was a whelming sound
— he stept,
There was a cooler light; and so he kept
Towards it by a sandy path, and lo! ¹⁰²⁰
More suddenly than doth a moment go,
The visions of the earth were gone and
fled —
He saw the giant sea above his head.

BOOK III

THERE are who lord it o'er their fellow-
men
With most prevailing tinsel: who unpen
Their baating vanities, to browse away
The comfortable green and juicy hay
From human pastures; or, O torturing
fact!
Who, through an idiot blink, will see un-
pack'd
Fire-branded foxes to sear up and singe
Our gold and ripe-ear'd hopes. With not
one tinge
Of sanctuary splendour, not a sight

Able to face an owl's, they still are dight
By the blear-eyed nations in empurpled
vests, 11

And crowns, and turbans. With unladen
breasts,

Save of blown self-applause, they proudly
mount

To their spirit's perch, their being's high
account,

Their tiptop nothings, their dull skies, their
thrones —

Amid the fierce intoxicating tones

Of trumpets, shoutings, and belabour'd
drums,

And sudden cannon. Ah! how all this
hums,

In wakeful ears, like uproar past and
gone —

Like thunder-clouds that spake to Baby-
lon, 20

And set those old Chaldeans to their
tasks. —

Are then regalities all gilded masks ?

No, there are throned seats unscalable

But by a patient wing, a constant spell,

Or by ethereal things that, unconfined,

Can make a ladder of the eternal wind,

And poise about in cloudy thunder-tents

To watch the abysm-birth of elements.

Aye, 'bove the withering of old-lipp'd Fate

A thousand Powers keep religious state, 30

In water, fiery realm, and airy bourne;

And, silent as a consecrated urn,

Hold spherey sessions for a season due.

Yet few of these far majesties, ah, few !

Have bared their operations to this globe —

Few, who with gorgeous pageantry enrobe

Our piece of heaven — whose benevolence

Shakes hand with our own Ceres; every
sense

Filling with spiritual sweets to plenitude,

As bees gorge full their cells. And, by
the feud 40

'Twixt Nothing and Creation, I here swear,

Eterne Apollo ! that thy Sister fair

Is of all these the gentlier-mightiest.

When thy gold breath is misting in the
west,

She unobserved steals unto her throne,
And there she sits most meek and most
alone;

As if she had not pomp subservient;

As if thine eye, high Poet ! was not bent

Towards her with the Muses in thine heart;

As if the minist'ring stars kept not apart,

Waiting for silver-footed messages. 51

O Moon ! the oldest shades 'mong oldest
trees

Feel palpitations when thou lookest in:

O Moon ! old boughs lisp forth a holier din

The while they feel thine airy fellowship.

Thou dost bless everywhere, with silver lip

Kissing dead things to life. The sleeping
kine,

Couch'd in thy brightness, dream of fields
divine:

Innumerable mountains rise, and rise,

Ambitious for the hallowing of thine eyes;

And yet thy benediction passeth not 61

One obscure hiding-place, one little spot

Where pleasure may be sent: the nested
wren

Has thy fair face within its tranquil ken,

And from beneath a sheltering ivy leaf

Takes glimpses of thee; thou art a relief

To the poor patient oyster, where it sleeps

Within its pearly house. — The mighty
deeps,

The monstrous sea is thine — the myriad
sea !

O Moon ! far-spooming Ocean bows to
thee, 70

And Tellus feels his forehead's cumbrous
load.

Cynthia ! where art thou now ? What
far abode

Of green or silvery bower doth enshrine

Such utmost beauty ? Alas, thou dost pine

For one as sorrowful: thy cheek is pale

For one whose cheek is pale: thou dost be-
vail

His tears, who weeps for thee. Where dost
thou sigh ?

Ah ! surely that light peeps from Vesper's
eye,

Or what a thing is love ! 'Tis She, but lo!
How changed, how full of ache, how gone
in woe ! 80

She dies at the thinnest cloud; her loveliness

Is wan on Neptune's blue: yet there's a stress

Of love-spangles, just off yon cape of trees,
Dancing upon the waves, as if to please
The curly foam with amorous influence.

O, not so idle: for down-glancing thence,
She fathoms eddies, and runs wild about
O'erwhelming water-courses; scaring out
The thorny sharks from hiding-holes, and
fright'ning

Their savage eyes with unaccustom'd lighting. 90

Where will the splendour be content to reach ?

O love ! how potent hast thou been to teach

Strange journeyings ! Wherever beauty dwells,

In gulf or aerie, mountains or deep dells,
In light, in gloom, in star or blazing sun,
Thou pointest out the way, and straight 't is won.

Amid his toil thou gavest Leander breath;
Thou leddest Orpheus through the gleams
of death;

Thou madest Pluto bear thin element;
And now, O winged Chieftain ! thou hast sent 100

A moonbeam to the deep, deep water-world,

To find Endymion.

On gold sand impearl'd

With lily shells, and pebbles milky white,
Poor Cynthia greeted him, and soothed her light

Against his pallid face: he felt the charm
To breathlessness, and suddenly a warm
Of his heart's blood: 't was very sweet; he stay'd

His wandering steps, and half-entranced laid

His head upon a tuft of straggling weeds,

To taste the gentle moon, and freshening beads, 110

Lash'd from the crystal roof by fishes tails.

And so he kept, until the rosy veils

Mantling the east, by Aurora's peering hand

Were lifted from the water's breast, and fann'd

Into sweet air; and sober'd morning came
Meekly through billows: — when like taper-flame

Left sudden by a dallying breath of air,
He rose in silence, and once more 'gan fare
Along his fated way.

Far had he roam'd,
With nothing save the hollow vast, that foam'd 120

Above, around, and at his feet; save things
More dead than Morpheus' imaginings:

Old rusted anchors, helmets, breastplates large

Of gone sea-warriors; brazen beaks and targe;

Rudders that for a hundred years had lost
The sway of human hand; gold vase emboss'd

With long-forgotten story, and wherein
No reveller had ever dipp'd a chin
But those of Saturn's vintage; mouldering scrolls,

Writ in the tongue of heaven, by those souls 130

Who first were on the earth; and sculptures rude

In ponderous stone, developing the mood
Of ancient Nox; — then skeletons of man,
Of beast, behemoth, and leviathan,

And elephant, and eagle, and huge jaw
Of nameless monster. A cold leaden awe
These secrets struck into him; and unless
Dian had chased away that heaviness,
He might have died: but now, with cheered feel,

He onward kept; wooing these thoughts to steal 140

About the labyrinth in his soul of love.

'What is there in thee, Moon! that
 thou shouldst move
 My heart so potently? When yet a child
 I oft have dried my tears when thou hast
 smiled.
 Thou seem'dst my sister: hand in hand we
 went
 From eve to morn across the firmament.
 No apples would I gather from the tree,
 Till thou hadst cool'd their cheeks de-
 liciously:
 No tumbling water ever spake romance,
 But when my eyes with thine thereon could
 dance: 150
 No woods were green enough, no bower
 divine,
 Until thou liftedst up thine eyelids fine:
 In sowing-time ne'er would I dibble take,
 Or drop a seed, till thou wast wide awake;
 And, in the summer tide of blossoming,
 No one but thee hath heard me blithely sing
 And mesh my dewy flowers all the night.
 No melody was like a passing spright
 If it went not to solemnize thy reign.
 Yes, in my boyhood, every joy and pain 160
 By thee were fashion'd to the self-same end;
 And as I grew in years, still didst thou
 blend
 With all my ardours; thou wast the deep
 glen;
 Thou wast the mountain-top—the sage's
 pen—
 The poet's harp—the voice of friends—
 the sun;
 Thou wast the river—thou wast glory
 won;
 Thou wast my clarion's blast—thou wast
 my steed—
 My goblet full of wine—my topmost
 deed:—
 Thou wast the charm of women, lovely
 Moon!
 O what a wild and harmonized tune 170
 My spirit struck from all the beautiful!
 On some bright essence could I lean, and
 lull
 Myself to immortality: I prest
 Nature's soft pillow in a wakeful rest.

But gentle Orb! there came a nearer bliss—
 My strange love came—Felicity's abyss!
 She came, and thou didst fade, and fade
 away—
 Yet not entirely; no, thy starry sway
 Has been an under-passion to this hour.
 Now I begin to feel thine orby power 180
 Is coming fresh upon me: O be kind,
 Keep back thine influence, and do not blind
 My sovereign vision.—Dearest love, for-
 give
 That I can think away from thee and live!—
 Pardon me, airy planet, that I prize
 One thought beyond thine argent luxuries!
 How far beyond!' At this a surprised
 start
 Frosted the springing verdure of his heart;
 For as he lifted up his eyes to swear
 How his own goddess was past all things
 fair, 190
 He saw far in the concave green of the sea
 An old man sitting calm and peacefully.
 Upon a weeded rock this old man sat,
 And his white hair was awful, and a mat
 Of weeds were cold beneath his cold thin
 feet;
 And, ample as the largest winding-sheet,
 A cloak of blue wrapp'd up his aged bones,
 O'erwrought with symbols by the deepest
 groans
 Of ambitious magic: every ocean-form
 Was woven in with black distinctness;
 storm, 200
 And calm, and whispering, and hideous roar
 Quicksand, and whirlpool, and deserted
 shore
 Were emblem'd in the woof; with every
 shape
 That skims, or dives, or sleeps, 'twixt cape
 and cape.
 The gulphing whale was like a dot in the
 spell,
 Yet look upon it, and 't would size and
 swell
 To its huge self; and the minutest fish
 Would pass the very hardest gazer's wish,
 And show his little eye's anatomy.
 Then there was pictured the regality 210

Of Neptune; and the sea-nymphs round
 his state,
 In beauteous vassalage, look up and wait.
 Beside this old man lay a pearly wand,
 And in his lap a book, the which he conn'd
 So steadfastly, that the new denizen
 Had time to keep him in amazed ken,
 To mark these shadowings, and stand in
 awe.

The old man raised his hoary head and
 saw
 The wilder'd stranger — seeming not to
 see,
 His features were so lifeless. Suddenly ²²⁰
 He woke as from a trance; his snow-white
 brows
 Went arching up, and like two magic
 ploughs
 Furrow'd deep wrinkles in his forehead
 large,
 Which kept as fixedly as rocky marge,
 Till round his wither'd lips had gone a
 smile.
 Then up he rose, like one whose tedious toil
 Had watch'd for years in forlorn hermitage,
 Who had not from mid-life to utmost age
 Eased in one accent his o'erburden'd soul,
 Even to the trees. He rose: he grasp'd
 his stole, ²³⁰
 With convulsed clenches waving it abroad,
 And in a voice of solemn joy, that awed
 Echo into oblivion, he said:—

'Thou art the man! Now shall I lay
 my head
 In peace upon my watery pillow: now
 Sleep will come smoothly to my weary
 brow.
 O Jove! I shall be young again, be young!
 O shell-borne Neptune, I am pierced and
 stung
 With new-born life! What shall I do?
 Where go,
 When I have cast this serpent-skin of
 woe? — ²⁴⁰
 I'll swim to the sirens, and one moment
 listen

Their melodies, and see their long hair
 glisten;
 Anon upon that giant's arm I'll be,
 That writhes about the roots of Sicily:
 To northern seas I'll in a twinkling sail,
 And mount upon the snortings of a whale
 To some black cloud; thence down I'll
 madly sweep
 On forked lightning, to the deepest deep,
 Where through some sucking pool I will
 be hurl'd
 With rapture to the other side of the
 world! ²⁵⁰
 O, I am full of gladness! Sisters three,
 I bow full-hearted to your old decree!
 Yes, every god be thank'd, and power be-
 nign,
 For I no more shall wither, droop, and pine.
 Thou art the man!' Endymion started
 back
 Dismay'd; and, like a wretch from whom
 the rack
 Tortures hot breath, and speech of agony,
 Mutter'd: 'What lonely death am I to die
 In this cold region? Will he let me freeze,
 And float my brittle limbs o'er polar seas?
 Or will he touch me with his searing hand,
 And leave a black memorial on the sand?
 Or tear me piecemeal with a bony saw, ²⁶³
 And keep me as a chosen food to draw
 His magian fish through hated fire and
 flame?
 O misery of hell! resistless, tame,
 Am I to be burnt up? No, I will shout,
 Until the gods through heaven's blue look
 out! —
 O Tartarus! but some few days ago
 Her soft arms were entwining me, and on
 Her voice I hung like fruit among green
 leaves: ²⁷¹
 Her lips were all my own, and — ah, ripe
 sheaves
 Of happiness! ye on the stubble droop,
 But never may be garner'd. I must stoop
 My head, and kiss death's foot. Love!
 love, farewell!
 Is there no hope from thee? This horrid
 spell

Would melt at thy sweet breath. — By
Dian's hind

Feeding from her white fingers, on the
wind

I see thy streaming hair! and now, by
Pan,

I care not for this old mysterious man !' 280

He spake, and walking to that aged form,
Look'd high defiance. Lo ! his heart 'gan
warm

With pity, for the gray-hair'd creature
wept.

Had he then wrong'd a heart where sorrow
kept ?

Had he, though blindly contumelious,
brought

Rheum to kind eyes, a sting to human
thought,

Convulsion to a mouth of many years ?

He had in truth; and he was ripe for tears.

The penitent shower fell, as down he knelt
Before that care-worn sage, who trembling
felt 290

About his large dark locks, and faltering
spake:

'Arise, good youth, for sacred Phœbus'
sake !

I know thine inmost bosom, and I feel
A very brother's yearning for thee steal

Into mine own: for why ? thou openest

The prison gates that have so long oppress

My weary watching. Though thou know'st
it not,

Thou art commission'd to this fated spot

For great enfranchisement. O weep no
more !

I am a friend to love, to loves of yore: 300

Aye, hadst thou never loved an unknown
power,

I had been grieving at this joyous hour.

But even now most miserable old,

I saw thee, and my blood no longer cold

Gave mighty pulses: in this tottering case

Grew a new heart, which at this moment
plays

As dancingly as thine. Be not afraid,

For thou shalt hear this secret all display'd,
Now as we speed towards our joyous task.'

So saying, this young soul in age's
mask 310

Went forward with the Carian side by side:

Resuming quickly thus; while ocean's tide

Hung swollen at their backs, and jewell'd
sands

Took silently their foot-prints.

'My soul stands

Now past the midway from mortality,

And so I can prepare without a sigh

To tell thee briefly all my joy and pain.

I was a fisher once, upon this main,

And my boat danced in every creek and bay;

Rough billows were my home by night and

day, — 320

The sea-gulls not more constant; for I had

No housing from the storm and tempests

mad,

But hollow rocks, — and they were palaces

Of silent happiness, of slumberous ease:

Long years of misery have told me so.

Aye, thus it was one thousand years ago.

One thousand years ! — Is it then possible

To look so plainly through them ? to dispel

A thousand years with backward glance

sublime ?

To breathe away as 'twere all scummy

slime 330

From off a crystal pool, to see its deep,

And one's own image from the bottom

peep ?

Yes: now I am no longer wretched thrall,

My long captivity and moanings all

Are but a slime, a thin-pervading scum,

The which I breathe away, and thronging

come

Like things of yesterday my youthful plea-

asures:

'I touch'd no lute, I sang not, trod no
measures :

I was a lonely youth on desert shores.

My sports were lonely, 'mid continuous

roars, 340

And craggy isles, and sea-mew's plaintive
 cry
 Plaining discrepant between sea and sky.
 Dolphins were still my playmates; shapes
 unseen
 Would let me feel their scales of gold and
 green,
 Nor be my desolation; and, full oft,
 When a dread waterspout had rear'd aloft
 Its hungry hugeness, seeming ready ripe
 To burst with hoarsest thunderings, and
 wipe
 My life away like a vast sponge of fate, ³⁴⁹
 Some friendly monster, pitying my sad
 state,
 Has dived to its foundations, gulf'd it down,
 And left me tossing safely. But the crown
 Of all my life was utmost quietude:
 More did I love to lie in cavern rude,
 Keeping in wait whole days for Neptune's
 voice,
 And if it came at last, hark, and rejoice!
 There blush'd no summer eve but I would
 steer
 My skiff along green shelving coasts, to hear
 The shepherd's pipe come clear from aery
 steep,
 Mingled with ceaseless bleatings of his
 sheep: ³⁶⁰
 And never was a day of summer shine,
 But I beheld its birth upon the brine:
 For I would watch all night to see unfold
 Heaven's gates, and Æthon snort his morn-
 ing gold
 Wide o'er the swelling streams: and con-
 stantly
 At brim of day-tide, on some grassy lea,
 My nets would be spread out, and I at rest.
 The poor folk of the sea-country I blest
 With daily boon of fish most delicate:
 They knew not whence this bounty, and
 elate ³⁷⁰
 Would strew sweet flowers on a sterile
 beach.

'Why was I not contented? Wherefore
 reach
 At things which, but for thee, O Latmian!

Had been my dreary death? Fool! I began
 To feel distemper'd longings: to desire
 The utmost privilege that ocean's sire
 Could grant in benediction: to be free
 Of all his kingdom. Long in misery
 I wasted, ere in one extremest fit ³⁷⁹
 I plunged for life or death. To interknit
 One's senses with so dense a breathing stuff
 Might seem a work of pain; so not enough
 Can I admire how crystal-smooth it felt,
 And buoyant round my limbs. At first I
 dwell

Whole days and days in sheer astonishment;
 Forgetful utterly of self-intent;
 Moving but with the mighty ebb and flow.
 Then, like a new-fledged bird that first doth
 show

His spreaded feathers to the morrow chill,
 I tried in fear the pinions of my will. ³⁹⁰
 'Twas freedom! and at once I visited
 The ceaseless wonders of this ocean-bed.
 No need to tell thee of them, for I see
 That thou hast been a witness — it must be
 For these I know thou canst not feel a
 drouth,

By the melancholy corners of that mouth.
 So I will in my story straightway pass
 To more immediate matter. Woe, alas!
 That love should be my bane! Ah, Scylla
 fair!

Why did poor Glaucus ever — ever dare ⁴⁰⁰
 To sue thee to his heart? Kind stranger-
 youth!

I loved her to the very white of truth,
 And she would not conceive it. Timid
 thing!

She fled me swift as sea-bird on the wing,
 Round every isle, and point, and promon-
 tory,

From where large Hercules wound up his
 story

Far as Egyptian Nile. My passion grew
 The more, the more I saw her dainty hue
 Gleam delicately through the azure clear:
 Until 't was too fierce agony to bear; ⁴¹⁰
 And in that agony, across my grief
 It flash'd, that Circe might find some re-
 lief —

Cruel enchantress! So above the water
I rear'd my head, and look'd for Phæbus'
daughter.

Ææa's isle was wondering at the moon: —
It seem'd to whirl around me, and a swoon
Left me dead-drifting to that fatal power.

'When I awoke, 't was in a twilight
bower;

Just when the light of morn, with hum of
bees,

Stole through its verdurous matting of
fresh trees. 420

How sweet, and sweeter! for I heard a
lyre,

And over it a sighing voice expire.

It ceased — I caught light footsteps; and
anon

The fairest face that morn e'er look'd upon
Push'd through a screen of roses. Starry
Jove!

With tears, and smiles, and honey-words
she wove

A net whose thralldom was more bliss than
all

The range of flower'd Elysium. Thus did
fall

The dew of her rich speech: "Ah! art
awake?"

O let me hear thee speak, for Cupid's
sake! 430

I am so oppress'd with joy! Why, I have
shed

An urn of tears, as though thou wert cold
dead;

And now I find thee living, I will pour
From these devoted eyes their silver store,

Until exhausted of the latest drop,
So it will pleasure thee, and force thee

stop

Here, that I too may live: but if beyond
Such cool and sorrowful offerings, thou art

fond

Of soothing warmth, of dalliance supreme;
If thou art ripe to taste a long love-dream;

If smiles, if dimples, tongues for ardour
mute, 441

Hang in thy vision like a tempting fruit,

O let me pluck it for thee!" Thus she
link'd

Her charming syllables, till indistinct
Their music came to my o'er-sweeten'd
soul;

And then she hover'd over me, and stole
So near, that if no nearer it had been
This furrow'd visage thou hadst never seen.

'Young man of Latmos! thus particu-
lar

Am I, that thou may'st plainly see how
far 450

This fierce temptation went: and thou
may'st not

Exclaim, How, then, was Scylla quite for-
got?

'Who could resist? Who in this uni-
verse?

She did so breathe ambrosia; so immerse
My fine existence in a golden clime.

She took me like a child of suckling time,
And cradled me in roses. Thus con-
demn'd,

The current of my former life was stemm'd,
And to this arbitrary queen of sense

I bow'd a tranced vassal: nor would thence
Have moved, even though Amphion's harp

had woo'd 461

Me back to Scylla o'er the billows rude.

For as Apollo each eve doth devise

A new apparelling for western skies;

So every eve, nay, every spendthrift hour

Shed balmy consciousness within that
bower.

And I was free of haunts umbrageous;

Could wander in the mazy forest-house

Of squirrels, foxes shy, and antler'd deer,

And birds from coverts innermost and

drear 470

Warbling for very joy mellifluous sor-

row —

To me new-born delights!

'Now let me borrow,

For moments few, a temperament as stern

As Pluto's sceptre, that my words not burn

These uttering lips, while I in calm speech
tell
How specious heaven was changed to real
hell.

‘One morn she left me sleeping: half
awake
I sought for her smooth arms and lips, to
slake
My greedy thirst with nectarous camel-
draughts;
But she was gone. Whereat the barbed
shafts 480
Of disappointment stuck in me so sore,
That out I ran and search’d the forest o’er.
Wandering about in pine and cedar gloom
Damp awe assail’d me; for there ’gan to
boom
A sound of moan, an agony of sound,
Sepulchral from the distance all around.
Then came a conquering earth-thunder, and
rumbled
That fierce complain to silence: while I
stumbled
Down a precipitous path, as if impell’d.
I came to a dark valley. — Groanings
swell’d 490
Poisonous about my ears, and louder grew,
The nearer I approach’d a flame’s gaunt
blue,
That glared before me through a thorny
brake.
This fire, like the eye of gordian snake,
Bewitch’d me towards; and I soon was
near
A sight too fearful for the feel of fear:
In thicket hid I cursed the haggard scene —
The banquet of my arms, my arbour queen,
Seated upon an upturn forest root;
And all around her shapes, wizard and
brute, 500
Laughing, and wailing, grovelling, serpent-
ing,
Showing tooth, tusk, and venom-bag, and
sting !
O such deformities ! old Charon’s self,
Should he give up awhile his penny pelf,
And take a dream ’mong rushes Stygian,

It could not be so fantasied. Fierce, wan,
And tyrannizing was the lady’s look,
As over them a gnarled staff she shook.
Ofttimes upon the sudden she laugh’d out,
And from a basket emptied to the rout 510
Clusters of grapes, the which they raven’d
quick
And roar’d for more; with many a hungry
lick
About their shaggy jaws. Avenging, slow,
Anon she took a branch of mistletoe,
And emptied on ’t a black dull-gurgling
phial:
Groan’d one and all, as if some piercing
trial
Was sharpening for their pitiable bones.
She lifted up the charm: appealing groans
From their poor breasts went suing to her
ear
In vain; remorseless as an infant’s bier 520
She whisk’d against their eyes the sooty
oil.
Whereat was heard a noise of painful toil,
Increasing gradual to a tempest rage,
Shrieks, yells, and groans of torture-pil-
grimage;
Until their grieved bodies ’gan to bloat
And puff from the tail’s end to stifled
throat:
Then was appalling silence: then a sight
More wildering than all that hoarse af-
fright;
For the whole herd, as by a whirlwind
writhen,
Went through the dismal air like one huge
Python 530
Antagonizing Boreas, — and so vanish’d.
Yet there was not a breath of wind: she
banish’d
These phantoms with a nod. Lo ! from the
dark
Came waggish fauns, and nymphs, and
satyrs stark,
With dancing and loud revelry, — and went
Swifter than centaurs after rapine bent. —
Sighing an elephant appear’d and bow’d
Before the fierce witch, speaking thus aloud
In human accent: “ Potent goddess ! chief

Of pains resistless ! make my being brief,
 Or let me from this heavy prison fly: 541
 Or give me to the air, or let me die !
 I sue not for my happy crown again;
 I sue not for my phalanx on the plain;
 I sue not for my lone, my widow'd wife:
 I sue not for my ruddy drops of life,
 My children fair, my lovely girls and boys !
 I will forget them; I will pass these joys;
 Ask nought so heavenward, so too—too
 high:
 Only I pray, as fairest boon, to die, 550
 Or be deliver'd from this cumbrous flesh,
 From this gross, detestable, filthy mesh,
 And merely given to the cold bleak air.
 Have mercy, Goddess ! Circe, feel my
 prayer !”

‘That curst magician’s name fell icy numb
 Upon my wild conjecturing: truth had
 come
 Naked and sabre-like against my heart.
 I saw a fury whetting a death-dart;
 And my slain spirit, overwrought with
 fright,
 Fainted away in that dark lair of night. 560
 Think, my deliverer, how desolate
 My waking must have been ! disgust, and
 hate,
 And terrors manifold divided me
 A spoil amongst them. I prepared to flee
 Into the dungeon core of that wild wood:
 I fled three days — when lo ! before me
 stood
 Glaring the angry witch. O Dis, even now,
 A clammy dew is beading on my brow,
 At mere remembering her pale laugh, and
 curse.
 “Ha ! ha ! Sir Dainty ! there must be a
 nurse 570
 Made of rose-leaves and thistle-down, ex-
 press,
 To cradle thee my sweet, and lull thee:
 yes,
 I am too flinty-hard for thy nice touch:
 My tenderest squeeze is but a giant’s clutch.
 So, fairy-thing, it shall have lullabies
 Unheard of yet; and it shall still its cries

Upon some breast more lily-feminine.
 Oh, no — it shall not pine, and pine, and
 pine
 More than one pretty, trifling thousand
 years;
 And then ’t were pity, but fate’s gentle
 shears 580
 Cut short its immortality. Sea-flirt !
 Young dove of the waters ! truly I ’ll not
 hurt
 One hair of thine: see how I weep and sigh,
 That our heart-broken parting is so nigh.
 And must we part ? Ah, yes, it must be so.
 Yet ere thou leavest me in utter woe,
 Let me sob over thee my last adieus,
 And speak a blessing: Mark me ! thou hast
 thews
 Immortal, for thou art of heavenly race:
 But such a love is mine, that here I chase
 Eternally away from thee all bloom 591
 Of youth, and destine thee towards a tomb.
 Hence shalt thou quickly to the watery
 vast;
 And there, ere many days be overpast,
 Disabled age shall seize thee; and even
 then
 Thou shalt not go the way of aged men;
 But live and wither, cripple and still breathe
 Ten hundred years: which gone, I then be-
 queath
 Thy fragile bones to unknown burial.
 Adieu, sweet love, adieu !” — As shot stars
 fall, 600
 She fled ere I could groan for mercy.
 Stung
 And poisoned was my spirit: despair sung
 A war-song of defiance ’gainst all hell.
 A hand was at my shoulder to compel
 My sullen steps; another ’fore my eyes
 Moved on with pointed finger. In this
 guise
 Enforced, at the last by ocean’s foam
 I found me; by my fresh, my native home.
 Its tempering coolness, to my life akin,
 Came salutary as I waded in; 610
 And, with a blind voluptuous rage, I gave
 Battle to the swollen billow-ridge, and
 drave

Large froth before me, while there yet
remain'd

Hale strength, nor from my bones all mar-
row drain'd.

'Young lover, I must weep — such hell-
ish spite

With dry cheek who can tell? While
thus my might

Proving upon this element, dismay'd,
Upon a dead thing's face my hand I laid;
I look'd — 't was Scylla! Cursed, cursed
Circe!

O vulture-witch, hast never heard of mercy?
Could not thy harshest vengeance be con-
tent, 621

But thou must nip this tender innocent
Because I loved her? — Cold, O cold in-
deed

Were her fair limbs, and like a common
weed

The sea-swell took her hair. Dead as she
was

I clung about her waist, nor ceased to pass
Fleet as an arrow through unfathom'd
brine,

Until there shone a fabric crystalline,
Ribb'd and inlaid with coral, pebble, and
pearl.

Headlong I darted; at one eager swirl 630
Gain'd its bright portal, enter'd, and be-
hold!

'T was vast, and desolate, and icy-cold;
And all around — But wherefore this to
thee

Who in few minutes more thyself shalt
see? —

I left poor Scylla in a niche and fled.

My fever'd parchings up, my scathing
dread

Met palsy half way: soon these limbs be-
came

Gaunt, wither'd, sapless, feeble, cramp'd,
and lame.

'Now let me pass a cruel, cruel space,
Without one hope, without one faintest
trace 640

Of mitigation, or redeeming bubble
Of colour'd phantasy: for I fear 't would
trouble

Thy brain to loss of reason: and next tell
How a restoring chance came down to quell
One half of the witch in me.

'On a day,

Sitting upon a rock above the spray,
I saw grow up from the horizon's brink
A gallant vessel: soon she seem'd to sink
Away from me again, as though her course
Had been resumed in spite of hindering
force — 650

So vanish'd: and not long, before arose
Dark clouds, and muttering of winds mo-
rose.

Old Æolus would stifle his mad spleen,
But could not; therefore, all the billows
green

Toss'd up the silver spume against the
clouds.

The tempest came: I saw that vessel's
shrouds

In perilous bustle; while upon the deck
Stood trembling creatures. I beheld the
wreck;

The final gulping; the poor struggling souls;
I heard their cries amid loud thunder-
rolls. 660

O they had all been saved but crazed eld
Annull'd my vigorous cravings; and thus
quell'd

And curb'd, think on 't, O Latmian! did I
sit

Writhing with pity, and a cursing fit
Against that hell-born Circe. The crew
had gone,

By one and one, to pale oblivion;
And I was gazing on the surges prone,
With many a scalding tear, and many a
groan,

When at my feet emerged an old man's
hand,

Grasping this scroll, and this same slender
wand. 670

I knelt with pain — reach'd out my hand
— had grasp'd

These treasures—touch'd the knuckles—
they unclasp'd—
Caught a finger: but the downward weight
O'erpower'd me—it sank. Then 'gan
abate

The storm, and through chill aguish gloom
outburst

The comfortable sun. I was athirst
To search the book, and in the warming
air

Parted its dripping leaves with eager care.
Strange matters did it treat of, and drew
on

My soul page after page, till well nigh
won 680

Into forgetfulness; when, stupefied,
I read these words, and read again, and
tried

My eyes against the heavens, and read
again.

O what a load of misery and pain
Each Atlas-line bore off!—a shine of hope
Came gold around me, cheering me to
cope

Strenuous with hellish tyranny. Attend!
For thou hast brought their promise to an
end.'

*In the wide sea there lives a forlorn wretch,
Doom'd with enfeebled carcase to outstretch 690
His loath'd existence through ten centuries,
And then to die alone. Who can devise
A total opposition? No one. So*

*One million times ocean must ebb and flow,
And he oppressed. Yet he shall not die,
These things accomplish'd:—If he utterly
Scans all the depths of magic, and expounds
The meanings of all motions, shapes, and
sounds;*

*If he explores all forms and substances
Straight homeward to their symbol-essences;
He shall not die. Moreover, and in chief, 701
He must pursue this task of joy and grief
Most piously;—all lovers tempest-tost,
And in the savage overwhelming lost,
He shall deposit side by side, until
Time's creeping shall the dreary space fulfil:
Which done, and all these labours ripened,*

*A youth, by heavenly power loved and led,
Shall stand before him; whom he shall direct
How to consummate all. The youth elect 710
Must do the thing, or both will be de-
stroy'd.—*

'Then,' cried the young Endymion, over-
joy'd,

'We are twin brothers in this destiny!
Say, I entreat thee, what achievement high
Is, in this restless world, for me reserved.

What! if from thee my wandering feet
had swerved,

Had we both perish'd?'—'Look!' the
sage replied,

'Dost thou not mark a gleaming through
the tide,

Of divers brilliances? 't is the edifice
I told thee of, where lovely Scylla lies; 720
And where I have enshrined piously

All lovers, whom fell storms have doom'd
to die

Throughout my bondage.' Thus discours-
ing, on

They went till unobscured the porches
shone;

Which hurryingly they gain'd, and enter'd
straight.

Sure never since king Neptune held his
state

Was seen such wonder underneath the
stars.

Turn to some level plain where haughty
Mars

Has legion'd all his battle; and behold
How every soldier, with firm foot, doth
hold 730

His even breast: see, many steeled squares,
And rigid ranks of iron—whence who
dares

One step? Imagine further, line by line,
These warrior thousands on the field su-
pine:—

So in that crystal place, in silent rows,
Poor lovers lay at rest from joys and
woes.—

The stranger from the mountains, breath-
less, traced

Such thousands of shut eyes in order
placed;

Such ranges of white feet, and patient lips
All ruddy, — for here death no blossom
nips. 740

He mark'd their brows and foreheads; saw
their hair

Put sleekly on one side with nicest care;
And each one's gentle wrists, with rever-
ence,

Put cross-wise to its heart.

‘Let us commence,’

Whisper'd the guide, stuttering with joy,
‘even now.’

He spake, and, trembling like an aspen-
bough,

Began to tear his scroll in pieces small,
Uttering the while some mumblings fu-
neral.

He tore it into pieces small as snow
That drifts unfeather'd when bleak north-
erns blow; 750

And having done it, took his dark blue
cloak

And bound it round Endymion: then struck
His wand against the empty air times
nine. —

‘What more there is to do, young man, is
thine:

But first a little patience; first undo
This tangled thread, and wind it to a clue.
Ah, gentle ! 't is as weak as spider's skein;
And shouldst thou break it — What, is it
done so clean ?

A power overshadows thee ! Oh, brave !
The spite of hell is tumbling to its grave.
Here is a shell; 't is pearly blank to me, 761
Nor mark'd with any sign or character —
Canst thou read aught ? O read for pity's
sake !

Olympus ! we are safe ! Now, Carian,
break

This wand against yon lyre on the pedes-
tal.'

'T was done: and straight with sudden
swell and fall

Sweet music breathed her soul away, and
sigh'd

A lullaby to silence. — ‘Youth ! now strew
These minced leaves on me, and passing
through

Those files of dead, scatter the same
around, 770

And thou wilt see the issue.’ — ‘Mid the
sound

Of flutes and viols, ravishing his heart,
Endymion from Glaucus stood apart,
And scatter'd in his face some fragments
light.

How lightning-swift the change ! a youth-
ful wight

Smiling beneath a coral diadem,
Out-sparkling sudden like an upturn'd gem,
Appear'd, and, stepping to a beauteous
corse,

Kneel'd down beside it, and with tenderest
force

Press'd its cold hand, and wept, — and
Scylla sigh'd ! 780

Endymion, with quick hand, the charm ap-
plied —

The nymph arose: he left them to their joy,
And onward went upon his high employ,
Showering those powerful fragments on
the dead.

And, as he pass'd, each lifted up its head,
As doth a flower at Apollo's touch.

Death felt it to his inwards: 't was too
much:

Death fell a-weeping in his charnel-house.
The Latmian persevered along, and thus

All were reanimated. There arose 790
A noise of harmony, pulses and throes

Of gladness in the air — while many, who
Had died in mutual arms devout and true
Sprang to each other madly; and the rest
Felt a high certainty of being blest.

They gazed upon Endymion. Enchant-
ment

Grew drunken, and would have its head
and bent.

Delicious symphonies, like airy flowers,
Budded, and swell'd, and, full-blown, shed
full showers

Of light, soft, unseen leaves of sounds
divine. 800

The two deliverers tasted a pure wine
Of happiness, from fairy press oozed out.
Speechless they eyed each other, and about
The fair assembly wandered to and fro,
Distracted with the richest overflow
Of joy that ever pour'd from heaven.

— 'Away !'

Shouted the new born god; 'Follow, and
pay

Our piety to Neptunus supreme !' —
Then Scylla, blushing sweetly from her
dream,

They led on first, bent to her meek sur-
prise, 810

Through portal columns of a giant size
Into the vaulted, boundless emerald.

Joyous all follow'd, as the leader call'd,
Down marble steps; pouring as easily

As hour-glass sand — and fast, as you
might see

Swallows obeying the south summer's call,
Or swans upon a gentle waterfall.

Thus went that beautiful multitude, nor
far,

Ere from among some rocks of glittering
spar, 819

Just within ken, they saw descending thick
Another multitude. Whereat more quick

Moved either host. On a wide sand they
met,

And of those numbers every eye was wet;
For each their old love found. A mur-
muring rose,

Like what was never heard in all the
throes

Of wind and waters: 'tis past human wit
To tell; 'tis dizziness to think of it.

This mighty consummation made, the
host

Moved on for many a league; and gain'd
and lost

Huge sea-marks; vanward swelling in
array, 830

And from the rear diminishing away, —
Till a faint dawn surprised them. Glaucus
cried,

'Behold ! behold, the palace of his pride !
God Neptune's palaces.' With noise in-
creased,

They shoulder'd on towards that brighten-
ing east.

At every onward step proud domes arose
In prospect, — diamond gleams and golden
glows

Of amber 'gainst their faces levelling.
Joyous, and many as the leaves in spring,
Still onward; still the splendour gradual
swell'd. 840

Rich opal domes were seen, on high upheld
By jasper pillars, letting through their
shafts

A blush of coral. Copious wonder-draughts
Each gazer drank; and deeper drank more
near:

For what poor mortals fragment up, as
mere

As marble was there lavish, to the vast
Of one fair palace, that far, far surpass'd,
Even for common bulk, those olden three,
Memphis, and Babylon, and Nineveh.

As large, as bright, as colour'd as the
bow 850

Of Iris, when unfading it doth show
Beyond a silvery shower, was the arch
Through which this Paphian army took its
march,

Into the outer courts of Neptune's state :
Whence could be seen, direct, a golden
gate,

To which the leaders sped; but not half
raught

Ere it burst open swift as fairy thought,
And made those dazzled thousands veil
their eyes

Like callow eagles at the first sunrise.
Soon with an eagle nativeness their gaze 860

Ripe from hue-golden swoons took all the
blaze,

And then, behold ! large Neptune on his
throne

Of emerald deep: yet not exalt alone;
At his right hand stood winged Love, and on
His left sat smiling Beauty's paragon.

Far as the mariner on highest mast
Can see all round upon the calmed vast,
So wide was Neptune's hall: and as the blue
Doth vault the waters, so the waters drew
Their doming curtains, high, magnificent, 870
Awed from the throne aloof;—and when
storm rent

Disclosed the thunder-gloomings in Jove's
air;

But soothed as now, flash'd sudden every-
where,

Noiseless, sub-marine cloudlets, glittering
Death to a human eye: for there did spring
From natural west, and east, and south, and
north,

A light as of four sunsets, blazing forth
A gold-green zenith 'bove the Sea-God's
head.

Of lucid depth the floor, and far outspread
As breezeless lake, on which the slim
canoe 880

Of feather'd Indian darts about, as through
The delicatest air: air verily,
But for the portraiture of clouds and sky:
This palace floor breath-air, — but for the
amaze

Of deep-seen wonders motionless, — and
blaze

Of the dome pomp, reflected in extremes,
Globing a golden sphere.

They stood in dreams
Till Triton blew his horn. The palace rang;
The Nereids danced; the Sirens faintly
sang;

And the great Sea-King bow'd his dripping
head. 890

Then Love took wing, and from his pinions
shed

On all the multitude a nectarous dew.
The ooze-born Goddess beckoned and drew
Fair Scylla and her guides to conference;
And when they reach'd the throned emi-
nence

She kiss'd the sea-nymph's cheek, — who
sat her down

A-toying with the doves. Then, — 'Mighty
crown

And sceptre of this kingdom!' Venus
said,

'Thy vows were on a time to Nais paid:
Behold!' — Two copious tear-drops instant
fell 900

From the God's large eyes; he smiled de-
lectable,

And over Glaucus held his blessing hands. —
'Endymion! Ah! still wandering in the
bands

Of love? Now this is cruel. Since the
hour

I met thee in earth's bosom, all my power
Have I put forth to serve thee. What, not
yet

Escaped from dull mortality's harsh net?
A little patience, youth! 't will not be long
Or I am skillless quite: an idle tongue,

A humid eye, and steps luxurious, 910
Where these are new and strange, are
ominous.

Aye, I have seen these signs in one of
heaven,

When others were all blind; and were I
given

To utter secrets, haply I might say
Some pleasant words: — but Love will have
his day.

So wait awhile expectant. Pr'ythee soon.
Even in the passing of thine honey-moon,
Visit thou my Cytherea: thou wilt find
Cupid well-natured, my Adonis kind;
And pray persuade with thee — Ah, I have
done, 920

All blisses be upon thee, my sweet son!' —
Thus the fair goddess: while Endymion
Knelt to receive those accents halcyon.

Meantime a glorious revelry began
Before the Water-Monarch. Nectar ran
In courteous fountains to all cups out-
reach'd;
And plunder'd vines, teeming exhaustless
pleach'd

New growth about each shell and pendent
lyre;

The which, in disentangling for their fire,
Pull'd down fresh foliage and coverture ⁹³⁰
For dainty toying. Cupid, empire-sure,
Flutter'd and laugh'd, and oft-times through
the throng

Made a delighted way. Then dance, and
song,

And garlanding, grew wild; and pleasure
reign'd.

In harmless tendril they each other chain'd,
And strove who should be smother'd deep-
est in

Fresh crush of leaves.

O 't is a very sin

For one so weak to venture his poor verse
In such a place as this. O do not curse, ⁹³⁹
High Muses ! let him hurry to the ending.

All suddenly were silent. A soft blend-
ing
Of dulcet instruments came charmingly;
And then a hymn.

'King of the stormy sea !

Brother of Jove, and co-inheritor
Of elements ! Eternally before
Thee the waves awful bow. Fast, stubborn
rock,

At thy fear'd trident shrinking, doth unlock
Its deep foundations, hissing into foam.

All mountain-rivers, lost in the wide home
Of thy capacious bosom, ever flow. ⁹⁵⁰

Thou frownest, and old Æolus thy foe
Skulks to his cavern, 'mid the gruff com-
plaint

Of all his rebel tempests. Dark clouds
faint

When, from thy diadem, a silver gleam
Slants over blue dominion. Thy bright
team

Gulfs in the morning light, and seeds along
To bring thee nearer to that golden song
Apollo singeth, while his chariot
Waits at the doors of heaven. Thou art
not

For scenes like this: an empire stern hast
thou; ⁹⁶⁰

And it hath furrow'd that large front: yet
now,

As newly come of heaven, dost thou sit
To blend and interknit

Subdued majesty with this glad time.

O shell-borne King sublime !

We lay our hearts before thee evermore —
We sing, and we adore !

'Breathe softly, flutes;

Be tender of your strings, ye soothing
lutes;

Nor be the trumpet heard ! O vain, O
vain; ⁹⁷⁰

Not flowers budding in an April rain,
Nor breath of sleeping dove, nor river's
flow, —

No, nor the Æolian twang of Love's own
bow,

Can mingle music fit for the soft ear
Of goddess Cytherea !

Yet deign, white Queen of Beauty, thy fair
eyes

On our soul's sacrifice.

'Bright-winged Child !

Who has another care when thou hast
smiled ?

Unfortunates on earth, we see at last ⁹⁸⁰
All death-shadows, and glooms that over-
cast

Our spirits, fann'd away by thy light pin-
ions.

O sweetest essence ! sweetest of all min-
ions !

God of warm pulses, and dishevell'd hair,
And panting bosoms bare !

Dear unseen light in darkness ! eclipser
Of light in light ! delicious poisoner !

Thy venom'd goblet will we quaff until
We fill — we fill ! ⁹⁸⁹

And by thy Mother's lips — ,

Was heard no more

For clamour, when the golden palace door
Open'd again, and from without, in shone

A new magnificence. On oozy throne
Smooth-moving came Oceanus the old,
To take a latest glimpse at his sheepfold,
Before he went into his quiet cave
To muse for ever — Then a lucid wave,
Scoop'd from its trembling sisters of mid-
sea,

Afloat, and pillowing up the majesty
Of Doris, and the *Ægean* seer, her spouse —
Next, on a dolphin, clad in laurel boughs,
Theban Amphion leaning on his lute: ¹⁰⁰²
His fingers went across it — All were mute
To gaze on Amphitrite, queen of pearls,
And Thetis pearly too. —

The palace whirls
Around giddy Endymion; seeing he
Was there far strayed from mortality.
He could not bear it — shut his eyes in
vain;

Imagination gave a dizzier pain.
'O I shall die! sweet Venus, be my stay!
Where is my lovely mistress? Well-
away! ¹⁰⁰¹

I die — I hear her voice — I feel my
wing —'

At Neptune's feet he sank. A sudden
ring

Of Nereids were about him, in kind strife
To usher back his spirit into life:
But still he slept. At last they interwove
Their cradling arms, and purposed to con-
vey

Towards a crystal bower far away.

Lo! while slow carried through the pity-
ing crowd,

To his inward senses these words spake
aloud; ¹⁰²⁰

Written in starlight on the dark above:

'Dearest Endymion! my entire love!

How have I dwelt in fear of fate; 'tis
done —

Immortal bliss for me too hast thou won.

Arise then! for the hen-dove shall not
hatch

Her ready eggs, before I'll kissing snatch

Thee into endless heaven. Awake! awake!'

The youth at once arose: a placid lake
Came quiet to his eyes; and forest green,
Cooler than all the wonders he had seen,
Lull'd with its simple song his fluttering
breast. ¹⁰³¹

How happy once again in grassy nest!

BOOK IV

MUSE of my native land! loftiest Muse!
O first-born on the mountains! by the
hues

Of heaven on the spiritual air begot:
Long didst thou sit alone in northern grot,
While yet our England was a wolfish den;
Before our forests heard the talk of men;
Before the first of Druids was a child; —
Long didst thou sit amid our regions wild,
Rapt in a deep prophetic solitude.

There came an eastern voice of solemn
mood: — ¹⁰

Yet wast thou patient. Then sang forth
the Nine,

Apollo's garland: — yet didst thou divine
Such home-bred glory, that they cried in
vain,

'Come hither, Sister of the Island!' Plain
Spake fair Ausonia; and once more she
spake

A higher summons: — still didst thou be-
take

Thee to thy native hopes. O thou hast
won

A full accomplishment! The thing is
done,

Which undone, these our latter days had
risen

On barren souls. Great Muse, thou know'st
what prison ²⁰

Of flesh and bone, curbs, and confines, and
frets

Our spirits' wings: despondency besets
Our pillows; and the fresh to-morrow morn
Seems to give forth its light in very scorn
Of our dull, uninspired, snail-paced lives.
Long have I said, how happy he who
shrives

To thee ! But then I thought on poets
gone,
And could not pray : — nor can I now — so
on
I move to the end in lowliness of heart. —

‘ Ah, woe is me ! that I should fondly
part 30
From my dear native land ! Ah, foolish
maid !

Glad was the hour, when, with thee, myri-
ads bade

Adieu to Ganges and their pleasant fields !
To one so friendless the clear freshet
yields

A bitter coolness ; the ripe grape is sour :
Yet I would have, great gods ! but one
short hour

Of native air — let me but die at home.’

Endymion to heaven’s airy dome
Was offering up a hecatomb of vows,
When these words reach’d him. Where-
upon he bows 40
His head through thorny-green entangle-
ment

Of underwood, and to the sound is bent,
Anxious as hind towards her hidden fawn.

‘ Is no one near to help me ? No fair
dawn

Of life from charitable voice ? No sweet
saying

To set my dull and sadden’d spirit playing ?
No hand to toy with mine ? No lips so
sweet

That I may worship them ? No eyelids
meet

To twinkle on my bosom ? No one dies
Before me, till from these enslaving eyes 50
Redemption sparkles ! — I am sad and
lost.’

Thou, Carian lord, hadst better have been
tost
Into a whirlpool. Vanish into air,
Warm mountaineer ! for canst thou only
bear

A woman’s sigh alone and in distress ?
See not her charms ! Is Phœbe passion-
less ?

Phœbe is fairer far — O gaze no more : —
Yet if thou wilt behold all beauty’s store,
Behold her panting in the forest grass !
Do not those curls of glossy jet surpass 60
For tenderness the arms so idly lain
Amongst them ? Feelest not a kindred
pain,

To see such lovely eyes in swimming search
After some warm delight, that seems to
perch

Dovelike in the dim cell lying beyond
Their upper lids ? — Hist !

‘ O for Hermes’ wand,
To touch this flower into human shape !
That woodland Hyacinthus could escape
From his green prison, and here kneeling
down

Call me his queen, his second life’s fair
crown ! 70

Ah me, how I could love ! — My soul doth
melt

For the unhappy youth — Love ! I have
felt

So faint a kindness, such a meek surrender
To what my own full thoughts had made
too tender,

That but for tears my life had fled away !
Ye deaf and senseless minutes of the day,
And thou, old forest, hold ye this for true,
There is no lightning, no authentic dew
But in the eye of love : there’s not a sound,
Melodious howsoever, can confound 80
The heavens and earth in one to such a
death

As doth the voice of love : there’s not a
breath

Will mingle kindly with the meadow air,
Till it has panted round, and stolen a share
Of passion from the heart !’ —

Upon a bough

He leant, wretched. He surely cannot now
Thirst for another love : O impious,
That he can even dream upon it thus ! —

Thought he, 'Why am I not as are the
dead,

Since to a woe like this I have been led ⁹⁰
Through the dark earth, and through the
wondrous sea ?

Goddess ! I love thee not the less : from
thee

By Juno's smile I turn not — no, no, no —
While the great waters are at ebb and
flow. —

I have a triple soul ! O fond pretence —

For both, for both my love is so immense,
I feel my heart is cut for them in twain.'

And so he groan'd, as one by beauty
slain.

The lady's heart beat quick, and he could
see

Her gentle bosom heave tumultuously. ¹⁰⁰
He sprang from his green covert : there
she lay,

Sweet as a musk-rose upon new-made hay ;
With all her limbs on tremble, and her
eyes

Shut softly up alive. To speak he tries :

'Fair damsel, pity me ! forgive that I

Thus violate thy bower's sanctity !

O pardon me, for I am full of grief —

Grief born of thee, young angel ! fairest
thief !

Who stolen hast away the wings where-
with

I was to top the heavens. Dear maid, sith
Thou art my executioner, and I feel ¹¹¹

Loving and hatred, misery and weal,

Will in a few short hours be nothing to me,

And all my story that much passion slew
me ;

Do smile upon the evening of my days ;

And, for my tortured brain begins to craze,

Be thou my nurse ; and let me understand

How dying I shall kiss that lily hand. —

Dost weep for me ? Then should I be con-
tent.

Scowl on, ye fates ! until the firmament ¹²⁰

Outblackens Erebus, and the full-cavern'd
earth

Crumbles into itself. By the cloud-girth

Of Jove, those tears have given me a thirst
To meet oblivion.' — As her heart would
burst

The maiden sobb'd awhile, and then re-
plied :

'Why must such desolation betide

As that thou speakest of ? Are not these
green nooks

Empty of all misfortune ? Do the brooks
Utter a gorgon voice ? Does yonder
thrush,

Schooling its half-fledged little ones to
brush ¹³⁰

About the dewy forest, whisper tales ? —

Speak not of grief, young stranger, or cold
snails

Will slime the rose to-night. Though if
thou wilt,

Methinks 't would be a guilt — a very
guilt —

Not to companion thee, and sigh away

The light — the dusk — the dark — till
break of day !'

'Dear lady,' said Endymion, 't is past :

I love thee ! and my days can never last.

That I may pass in patience still speak :

Let me have music dying, and I seek ¹⁴⁰

No more delight — I bid adieu to all.

Didst thou not after other climates call,

And murmur about Indian streams ?' —

Then she,

Sitting beneath the midmost forest tree,

For pity sang this roundelay —

'O Sorrow,

Why dost borrow

The natural hue of health, from vermeil
lips ? —

To give maiden blushes

To the white rose bushes ? ¹⁵⁰

Or is't thy dewy hand the daisy tips ?

'O Sorrow,

Why dost borrow

The lustrous passion from a falcon-eye ? —

To give the glowworm light ?

Or, on a moonless night,

To tinge, on siren shores, the salt sea-spry ?

‘O Sorrow,
Why dost borrow
The mellow ditties from a mourning
tongue? — 160
To give at evening pale
Unto the nightingale,
That thou mayst listen the cold dew
among?

‘O Sorrow,
Why dost borrow
Heart’s lightness from the merriment of
May? —
A lover would not tread
A cowslip on the head,
Though he should dance from eve till peep
of day —
Nor any drooping flower 170
Held sacred for thy bower,
Wherever he may sport himself and play.

‘To Sorrow,
I bade good morrow,
And thought to leave her far away behind;
But cheerly, cheerly,
She loves me dearly;
She is so constant to me, and so kind:
I would deceive her,
And so leave her, 180
But ah! she is so constant and so kind.

‘Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,
I sat a-weeping: in the whole world wide
There was no one to ask me why I wept, —
And so I kept
Brimming the water-lily cups with tears
Cold as my fears.

‘Beneath my palm-trees, by the river side,
I sat a-weeping: what enamour’d bride,
Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds,
But hides and shrouds 191
Beneath dark palm-trees by a river side?

‘And as I sat, over the light blue hills
There came a noise of revellers: the rills
Into the wide stream came of purple hue —
‘T was Bacchus and his crew!

The earnest trumpet spake, and silver
thrills
From kissing cymbals made a merry din —
‘T was Bacchus and his kin!
Like to a moving vintage down they came,
Crown’d with green leaves, and faces all
on flame; 201
All madly dancing through the pleasant
valley,
To scare thee, Melancholy!
O then, O then, thou wast a simple name!
And I forgot thee, as the berried holly
By shepherds is forgotten, when, in June,
Tall chestnuts keep away the sun and
moon: —
I rush’d into the folly!

‘Within his car, aloft, young Bacchus stood,
Trifling his ivy-dart, in dancing mood, 210
With sidelong laughing;
And little rills of crimson wine imbrued
His plump white arms, and shoulders,
enough white
For Venus’ pearly bite;
And near him rode Silenus on his ass,
Pelted with flowers as he on did pass
Tipsily quaffing.

‘Whence came ye, merry Damsels! whence
came ye!
So many, and so many, and such glee?
Why have ye left your bowers desolate, 220
Your lutes, and gentler fate? —
“We follow Bacchus! Bacchus on the wing,
A conquering!
Bacchus, young Bacchus! good or ill be-
tide,
We dance before him thorough kingdoms
wide: —
Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
To our wild minstrelsy!”

‘Whence came ye, jolly Satyrs! whence
came ye,
So many, and so many, and such glee?
Why have ye left your forest haunts, why
left 230
Your nuts in oak-tree cleft? —

"For wine, for wine we left our kernel tree;
For wine we left our heath, and yellow
brooms,

And cold mushrooms;

For wine we follow Bacchus through the
earth;

Great god of breathless cups and chirping
mirth! —

Come hither, lady fair, and joined be
To our mad minstrelsy!"

'Over wide streams and mountains great
we went,

And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent,
Onward the tiger and the leopard pants, ²⁴¹

With Asian elephants:

Onward these myriads — with song and
dance,

With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians'
prance,

Web-footed alligators, crocodiles,
Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,

Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil
Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers' toil:

With toying oars and silken sails they glide,
Nor care for wind and tide. ²⁵⁰

'Mounted on panthers' furs and lions'
manes,

From rear to van they scour about the
plains;

A three days' journey in a moment done:

And always, at the rising of the sun,

About the wilds they hunt with spear and
horn,

On spleenful unicorn.

'I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown

Before the vine-wreath crown!

I saw parch'd Abyssinia rouse and sing

To the silver cymbals' ring! ²⁶⁰

I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce

Old Tartary the fierce!

The Kings of Inde their jewel-sceptres vail,

And from their treasures scatter pearled
hail;

Great Brahma from his mystic heaven
groans,

And all his priesthood moans;
Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning
pale. —

Into these regions came I following him,
Sick-hearted, weary — so I took a whim
To stray away into these forests drear ²⁷⁰

Alone, without a peer:

And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

'Young Stranger!

I've been a ranger

In search of pleasure throughout every
clime:

Alas, 't is not for me!

Bewitch'd I sure must be,

To lose in grieving all my maiden prime.

'Come then, Sorrow!

Sweetest Sorrow!

²⁸⁰

Like an own babe I nurse thee on my
breast:

I thought to leave thee

And deceive thee,

But now of all the world I love thee best.

'There is not one,

No, no, not one

But thee to comfort a poor lonely maid;

Thou art her mother,

And her brother,

Her playmate, and her wooer in the
shade.' ²⁹⁰

O what a sigh she gave in finishing,

And look, quite dead to every worldly
thing!

Endymion could not speak, but gazed on
her:

And listened to the wind that now did stir

About the crisped oaks full drearily,

Yet with as sweet a softness as might be

Remember'd from its velvet summer song.

At last he said: 'Poor lady, how thus long

Have I been able to endure that voice? ²⁹⁹

Fair Melody! kind Siren! I've no choice;

I must be thy sad servant evermore:

I cannot choose but kneel here and adore.

Alas, I must not think — by Phœbe, no!

Let me not think, soft Angel! shall it be
so?

Say, beautifullest, shall I never think?
O thou couldst foster me beyond the brink
Of recollection! make my watchful care
Close up its bloodshot eyes, nor see de-
spair!

Do gently murder half my soul, and I
Shall feel the other half so utterly! — 310
I'm giddy at that cheek so fair and smooth;
O let it blush so ever! let it soothe
My madness! let it mantle rosy-warm
With the tinge of love, panting in safe
alarm. —

This cannot be thy hand, and yet it is;
And this is sure thine other softling — this
Thine own fair bosom, and I am so near!
Wilt fall asleep? O let me sip that tear!
And whisper one sweet word that I may
know

This is this world — sweet dewy blossom!'
— *Woe!* 320

*Woe! woe to that Endymion! Where is
he? —*

Even these words went echoing dismally
Through the wide forest — a most fearful
tone,

Like one repenting in his latest moan;
And while it died away a shade pass'd by,
As of a thundercloud. When arrows fly
Through the thick branches, poor ring-
doves sleek forth

Their timid necks and tremble; so these
both 328

Leant to each other trembling, and sat so
Waiting for some destruction — when lo!
Foot-feather'd Mercury appear'd sublime
Beyond the tall tree tops; and in less time
Than shoots the slanted hail-storm, down
he dropt

Towards the ground; but rested not, nor
stopt

One moment from his home: only the
sword

He with his wand light touch'd, and hea-
venward

Swifter than sight was gone — even be-
fore

The teeming earth a sudden witness bore
Of his swift magic. Diving swans appear
Above the crystal circlings white and
clear; 340

And catch the cheated eye in wild surprise,
How they can dive in sight and unseen
rise —

So from the turf outsprang two steeds jet-
black,

Each with large dark blue wings upon his
back.

The youth of Caria placed the lovely dame
On one, and felt himself in spleen to tame
The other's fierceness. Through the air
they flew,

High as the eagles. Like two drops of
dew

Exhaled to Phœbus' lips, away they are
gone, 349

Far from the earth away — unseen, alone,
Among cool clouds and winds, but that the
free,

The buoyant life of song can floating be
Above their heads, and follow them untired.
Muse of my native land, am I inspired?

This is the giddy air, and I must spread
Wide pinions to keep here; nor do I dread
Or height, or depth, or width, or any
chance

Precipitous: I have beneath my glance
Those towering horses and their mournful
freight. 359

Could I thus sail, and see, and thus await
Fearless for power of thought, without
thine aid? —

There is a sleepy dusk, an odorous shade
From some approaching wonder, and be-
hold

Those winged steeds, with snorting nostrils
bold

Snuff at its faint extreme, and seem to
tire,

Dying to embers from their native fire!

There curl'd a purple mist around them;
soon,
It seem'd as when around the pale new
moon

Sad Zephyr droops the clouds like weeping
willow:
'T was Sleep slow journeying with head on
pillow 370
For the first time, since he came nigh dead-
born
From the old womb of night, his cave for-
lorn
Had he left more forlorn; for the first
time,
He felt aloof the day and morning's
prime —
Because into his depth Cimmerian
There came a dream, showing how a young
man,
Ere a lean bat could plump its wintery
skin,
Would at high Jove's empyreal footstool
win
An immortality, and how espouse
Jove's daughter, and be reckon'd of his
house. 380
Now was he slumbering towards heaven's
gate,
That he might at the threshold one hour
wait
To hear the marriage melodies, and then
Sink downward to his dusky cave again.
His litter of smooth semiluculent mist,
Diversely tinged with rose and amethyst,
Puzzled those eyes that for the centre
sought;
And scarcely for one moment could be
caught
His sluggish form reposing motionless.
Those two on winged steeds, with all the
stress 390
Of vision search'd for him, as one would
look
Athwart the fallows of a river nook
To catch a glance at silver-throated eels, —
Or from old Skiddaw's top, when fog con-
ceals
His rugged forehead in a mantle pale,
With an eye-guess towards some pleasant
vale
Desery a favourite hamlet faint and far.

These raven horses, though they foster'd
are
Of earth's splenetic fire, dully drop
Their full-vein'd ears, nostrils blood wide,
and stop; 400
Upon the spiritless mist have they out-
spread
Their ample feathers, are in slumber
dead, —
And on those pinions, level in mid air,
Endymion sleepeth and the lady fair.
Slowly they sail, slowly as icy isle
Upon a calm sea drifting: and meanwhile
The mournful wanderer dreams. Behold !
he walks
On heaven's pavement; brotherly he talks
To divine powers: from his hand full fain
Juno's proud birds are pecking pearly
grain: 410
He tries the nerve of Phœbus' golden bow,
And asketh where the golden apples grow:
Upon his arm he braces Pallas' shield,
And strives in vain to unsettle and wield
A Jovian thunderbolt: arch Hebe brings
A full-brimm'd goblet, dances lightly, sings
And tantalizes long; at last he drinks,
And lost in pleasure, at her feet he sinks,
Touching with dazzled lips her starlight
hand.
He blows a bugle, — an ethereal band 420
Are visible above: the Seasons four, —
Green-kirtled Spring, flush Summer, golden
store
In Autumn's sickle, Winter frosty hoar,
Join dance with shadowy Hours; while still
the blast,
In swells unmitigated, still doth last
To sway their floating morris. 'Whose is
this ?
Whose bugle ?' he inquires: they smile —
'O Dis !
Why is this mortal here ? Dost thou not
know
Its mistress' lips ? Not thou ? — 'T is
Dian's: lo ! 429
She rises crescented !' He looks, 't is she,
His very goddess: good-bye earth, and sea,

And air, and pains, and care, and suffering;
Good-bye to all but love! Then doth he
spring

Towards her, and awakes — and, strange,
o'erhead,

Of those same fragrant exhalations bred,
Beheld awake his very dream: the gods
Stood smiling; merry Hebe laughs and
nods;

And Phœbe bends towards him crescented.
O state perplexing! On the pinion bed,
Too well awake, he feels the panting side 440
Of his delicious lady. He who died
For soaring too audacious in the sun,
When that same treacherous wax began to
run,

Felt not more tongue-tied than Endymion.
His heart leapt up as to its rightful throne,
To that fair-shadow'd passion pulsed its
way —

Ah, what perplexity! Ah, well a day!
So fond, so beauteous was his bed-fellow,
He could not help but kiss her: then he
grew

Awhile forgetful of all beauty save 450
Young Phebe's, golden-hair'd; and so 'gan
crave

Forgiveness: yet he turn'd once more to look
At the sweet sleeper, — all his soul was
shook, —

She press'd his hand in slumber; so once
more

He could not help but kiss her and adore.
At this the shadow wept, melting away.

The Latmian started up: 'Bright goddess,
stay!

Search my most hidden breast! By truth's
own tongue,

I have no dædale heart; why is it wrung 459
To desperation? Is there nought for me,
Upon the bourne of bliss, but misery?'

These words awoke the stranger of dark
tresses:

Her dawning love-look rapt Endymion
blesses

With 'haviour soft. Sleep yawn'd from
underneath.

'Thou swan of Ganges, let us no more
breathe

This murky phantasm! thou contented
seem'st

Pillow'd in lovely idleness, nor dream'st
What horrors may discomfort thee and
me.

Ah, shouldst thou die from my heart-
treachery! — 469

Yet did she merely weep — her gentle soul
Hath no revenge in it: as it is whole

In tenderness, would I were whole in love!
Can I prize thee, fair maid, all price above,
Even when I feel as true as innocence?

I do, I do. — What is this soul then?
Whence

Came it? It does not seem my own, and I
Have no self-passion or identity.

Some fearful end must be: where, where
is it?

By Nemesis, I see my spirit flit 479
Alone about the dark — Forgive me, sweet:
Shall we away?' He roused the steeds;
they beat

Their wings chivalrous into the clear air,
Leaving old Sleep within his vapoury lair.

The good-night blush of eve was waning
slow,

And Vesper, risen star, began to throe
In the dusk heavens silvery, when they
Thus sprang direct towards the Galaxy.
Nor did speed hinder converse soft and
strange —

Eternal oaths and vows they interchange,
In such wise, in such temper, so aloof 490
Up in the winds, beneath a starry roof,
So witless of their doom, that verily
'Tis well nigh past man's search their hearts
to see;

Whether they wept, or laugh'd, or grieved
or toy'd —

Most like with joy gone mad, with sorrow
cloy'd.

Full facing their swift flight, from ebon
streak,

The moon put forth a little diamond peak,

No bigger than an unobserved star,
 Or tiny point of fairy scimeter;
 Bright signal that she only stoop'd to tie 500
 Her silver sandals, ere deliciously
 She bow'd into the heavens her timid head.
 Slowly she rose, as though she would have
 fled,

While to his lady meek the Carian turn'd,
 To mark if her dark eyes had yet discern'd
 This beauty in its birth — Despair ! despair !
 He saw her body fading gaunt and spare
 In the cold moonshine. Straight he seized
 her wrist;

It melted from his grasp; her hand he
 kiss'd,
 And, horror ! kiss'd his own — he was
 alone. 510

Her steed a little higher soar'd, and then
 Dropt hawk-wise to the earth.

There lies a den,

Beyond the seeming confines of the space
 Made for the soul to wander in and trace
 Its own existence, of remotest glooms.
 Dark regions are around it, where the
 tombs

Of buried griefs the spirit sees, but scarce
 One hour doth linger weeping, for the
 pierce

Of new-born woe it feels more inly smart:
 And in these regions many a venom'd
 dart 520

At random flies; they are the proper home
 Of every ill: the man is yet to come
 Who hath not journey'd in this native hell.
 But few have ever felt how calm and well
 Sleep may be had in that deep den of all.
 There anguish does not sting, nor pleasure
 pall;

Woe-hurricanes beat ever at the gate,
 Yet all is still within and desolate.
 Beset with painful gusts, within ye hear 529
 No sound so loud as when on curtain'd bier
 The death-watch tick is stifled. Enter none
 Who strive therefore: on the sudden it is
 won.

Just when the sufferer begins to burn,
 Then it is free to him; and from an urn,

Still fed by melting ice, he takes a
 draught —

Young Semele such richness never quaff'd
 In her maternal longing. Happy gloom !
 Dark Paradise ! where pale becomes the
 bloom

Of health by due; where silence dreariest
 Is most articulate; where hopes infest; 540
 Where those eyes are the brightest far that
 keep

Their lids shut longest in a dreamless sleep.
 O happy spirit-home ! O wondrous soul !
 Pregnant with such a den to save the whole
 In thine own depth. Hail, gentle Carian !
 For, never since thy griefs and woes began,
 Hast thou felt so content: a grievous feud
 Hath led thee to this Cave of Quietude.

Aye, his lull'd soul was there, although up-
 borne

With dangerous speed: and so he did not
 mourn 550

Because he knew not whither he was going
 So happy was he, not the aerial blowing
 Of trumpets at clear parley from the east
 Could rouse from that fine relish, that high
 feast.

They stung the feather'd horse; with fierce
 alarm

He flapp'd towards the sound. Alas, no
 charm

Could lift Endymion's head, or he had
 view'd

A skyey mask, a pinion'd multitude, —
 And silvery was its passing: voices sweet
 Warbling the while as if to lull and greet
 The wanderer in his path. Thus warbled
 they, 560

While past the vision went in bright array

‘Who, who from Dian's feast would be
 away ?

For all the golden bowers of the day
 Are empty left ? Who, who away would
 be

From Cynthia's wedding and festivity ?
 Not Hesperus: lo ! upon his silver wings
 He leans away for highest heaven and sings
 Snapping his lucid fingers merrily ! —

Ah, Zephyrus ! art here, and Flora too ! 570
 Ye tender bibbers of the rain and dew,
 Young playmates of the rose and daffodil,
 Be careful, ere ye enter in, to fill

Your baskets high

With fennel green, and balm, and golden
 pines,

Savory, latter-mint, and columbines,
 Cool parsley, basil sweet, and sunny thyme;
 Yea, every flower and leaf of every clime,
 All gather'd in the dewy morning: hie

Away ! fly, fly ! — 580

Crystalline brother of the belt of heaven,
 Aquarius ! to whom king Jove has given
 Two liquid pulse streams 'stead of feath-
 er'd wings,

Two fanlike fountains, — thine illuminings
 For Dian play:

Dissolve the frozen purity of air;
 Let thy white shoulders silvery and bare
 Show cold through watery pinions; make
 more bright

The Star-Queen's crescent on her marriage
 night:

Haste, haste away ! — 590

Castor has tamed the planet Lion, see !

And of the Bear has Pollux mastery:

A third is in the race ! who is the third,

Speeding away swift as the eagle bird ?

The ramping centaur !

And the Lion's mane ! and: the Bear how
 fierce !

The Centaur's arrow ready seems to pierce
 Some enemy: far forth his bow is bent

Into the blue of heaven. He'll be shent,
 Pale unrelentor, 600

When he shall hear the wedding lutes
 a-playing. —

Andromeda ! sweet woman ! why delaying
 So timidly among the stars: come hither !
 Join this bright throng, and nimbly follow
 whither

They all are going.

Danae's Son, before Jove newly bow'd,
 Has wept for thee, calling to Jove aloud.

Thee, gentle lady, did he disenthral:

Ye shall for ever live and love, for all

Thy tears are flowing. — 610

By Daphne's fright, behold Apollo !' —

More

Endymion heard not: down his steed him
 bore,

Prone to the green head of a misty hill.

His first touch of the earth went nigh to
 kill.

'Alas !' said he, 'were I but always borne
 Through dangerous winds, had but my
 footsteps worn

A path in hell, for ever would I bless

Horrors which nourish an uneasiness

For my own sullen conquering: to him

Who lives beyond earth's boundary, grief
 is dim, 620

Sorrow is but a shadow: now I see

The grass; I feel the solid ground — Ah,
 me !

It is thy voice — divinest ! Where ? —
 who ? who .

Left thee so quiet on this bed of dew ?

Behold upon this happy earth we are;

Let us ay love each other; let us fare

On forest-fruits, and never, never go.

Among the abodes of mortals here below,

Or be by phantoms duped. O destiny !

Into a labyrinth now my soul would fly, 630

But with thy beauty will I deaden it.

Where didst thou melt to ? By thee will
 I sit

For ever: let our fate stop here — a kid

I on this spot will offer: Pan will bid

Us live in peace, in love and peace among

His forest wildernesses. I have clung

To nothing, loved a nothing, nothing seen

Or felt but a great dream ! Oh, I have
 been

Presumptuous against love, against the
 sky,

Against all elements, against the tie 640

Of mortals each to each, against the blooms

Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs

Of heroes gone ! Against his proper glory

Has my own soul conspired: so my story

Will I to children utter, and repent.

There never lived a mortal man, who bent

His appetite beyond his natural sphere,

But starved and died. My sweetest Indian,
 here,

Here will I kneel, for thou redeemed hast
My life from too thin breathing: gone and
past 650

Are cloudy phantasms. Caverns lone,
farewell!

And air of visions, and the monstrous swell
Of visionary seas! No, never more
Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore
Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast.
Adieu, my daintiest Dream! although so
vast

My love is still for thee. The hour may
come

When we shall meet in pure elysium.
On earth I may not love thee; and there-
fore

Doves will I offer up, and sweetest store 660
All through the teeming year: so thou wilt
shine

On me, and on this damsel fair of mine,
And bless our simple lives. My Indian
bliss!

My river-lily bud! one human kiss!
One sigh of real breath — one gentle
squeeze,

Warm as a dove's nest among summer
trees,

And warm with dew at ooze from living
blood!

Whither didst melt? Ah, what of that! —
all good

We'll talk about — no more of dreaming.
— Now,

Where shall our dwelling be? Under the
brow 670

Of some steep mossy hill, where ivy dun
Would hide us up, although spring leaves
were none;

And where dark yew trees, as we rustle
through

Will drop their scarlet berry cups of dew?
O thou wouldst joy to live in such a place;
Dusk for our loves, yet light enough to
grace

Those gentle limbs on mossy bed reclined:
For by one step the blue sky shouldst thou
find,

And by another, in deep dell below,

See, through the trees, a little river go 680
All in its mid-day gold and glimmering.
Honey from out the gnarled hive I'll bring
And apples, wan with sweetness, gather
thee, —

Cresses that grow where no man may the
see,

And sorrel untorn by the dew-claw'd stag:
Pipes will I fashion of the syrinx flag,
That thou mayst always know whither I
roam,

When it shall please thee in our quiet
home

To listen and think of love. Still let me
speak;

Still let me dive into the joy I seek, — 690
For yet the past doth prison me. The
rill,

Thou haply mayst delight in, will I fill
With fairy fishes from the mountain tarn,
And thou shalt feed them from the squir-
rel's barn.

Its bottom will I strew with amber shells,
And pebbles blue from deep enchanted
wells.

Its sides I'll plant with dew-sweet eglan-
tine,

And honeysuckles full of clear bee-wine.
I will entice this crystal rill to trace
Love's silver name upon the meadow's
face. 700

I'll kneel to Vesta, for a flame of fire;
And to god Phœbus, for a golden lyre;
To Empress Dian, for a hunting-spear;
To Vesper, for a taper silver-clear,
That I may see thy beauty through the
night;

To Flora, and a nightingale shall light
Tame on thy finger; to the River-gods,
And they shall bring thee taper fishing
rods

Of gold, and lines of Naiads' long bright
tress.

Heaven shield thee for thine utter loveli-
ness!

Thy mossy footstool shall the altar be
'Fore which I'll bend, bending, dear love
to thee:

Those lips shall be my Delphos, and shall speak
 Laws to my footsteps, colour to my cheek,
 Trembling or steadfastness to this same voice,
 And of three sweetest pleasurings the choice:
 And that affectionate light, those diamond things,
 Those eyes, those passions, those supreme pearl springs,
 Shall be my grief, or twinkle me to pleasure.
 Say, is not bliss within our perfect seizure?
 O that I could not doubt !' 720

The mountaineer

Thus strove by fancies vain and crude to clear
 His brier'd path to some tranquillity.
 It gave bright gladness to his lady's eye,
 And yet the tears she wept were tears of sorrow;
 Answering thus, just as the golden morning
 Beam'd upward from the valleys of the east:
 'O that the flutter of his heart had ceased,
 Or the sweet name of love had pass'd away.
 Young feather'd tyrant ! by a swift decay 730

Wilt thou devote this body to the earth:
 And I do think that at my very birth
 I lis'd thy blooming titles inwardly;
 For at the first, first dawn and thought of thee,
 With uplift hands I blest the stars of heaven.
 Art thou not cruel ? Ever have I striven
 To think thee kind, but ah, it will not do !
 When yet a child, I heard that kisses drew
 Favour from thee, and so I gave and gave
 To the void air, bidding them find out love:
 But when I came to feel how far above
 All fancy, pride, and fickle maidenhood,

All earthly pleasure, all imagined good,
 Was the warm tremble of a devout kiss, —
 Even then, that moment, at the thought of this,
 Fainting I fell into a bed of flowers,
 And languish'd there three days. Ye milder powers,
 Am I not cruelly wrong'd ? Believe, believe
 Me, dear Endymion, were I to weave
 With my own fancies garlands of sweet life, 750
 Thou shouldst be one of all. Ah, bitter strife !

I may not be thy love: I am forbidden —
 Indeed I am — thwarted, affrighted, chidden,
 By things I tremble at, and gorgon wrath.
 Twice hast thou ask'd whither I went: henceforth
 Ask me no more ! I may not utter it,
 Nor may I be thy love. We might commit
 Ourselves at once to vengeance; we might die;
 We might embrace and die: voluptuous thought !
 Enlarge not to my hunger, or I'm caught
 In trammels of perverse deliciousness. 761
 No, no, that shall not be: thee will I bless,
 And bid a long adieu.'

The Carian

No word return'd: both lovelorn, silent,
 wan,
 Into the valleys green together went.
 Far wandering, they were perforce content
 To sit beneath a fair lone beechen tree;
 Nor at each other gazed, but heavily
 Pored on its hazel cirque of shedded leaves.

Endymion ! unhappy ! it nigh grieves 770
 Me to behold thee thus in last extreme:
 Enskied ere this, but truly that I deem
 Truth the best music in a first-born song.
 Thy lute-voiced brother will I sing ere long,

And thou shalt aid — hast thou not aided
me ?

Yes, moonlight Emperor ! felicity
Has been thy meed for many thousand
years ;

Yet often have I, on the brink of tears,
Mourn'd as if yet thou wert a forester ; —
Forgetting the old tale.

He did not stir

His eyes from the dead leaves, or one small
pulse 781

Of joy he might have felt. The spirit culls
Unfaded amaranth, when wild it strays
Through the old garden-ground of boyish
days.

A little onward ran the very stream
By which he took his first soft poppy
dream ;

And on the very bark 'gainst which he
leant

A crescent he had carved, and round it
spent

His skill in little stars. The teeming tree
Had swollen and green'd the pious charac-
tery, 790

But not ta'en out. Why, there was not a
slope

Up which he had not fear'd the antelope ;
And not a tree, beneath whose rooty shade
He had not with his tamed leopards play'd ;
Nor could an arrow light, or javelin,
Fly in the air where his had never been —
And yet he knew it not.

O treachery !

Why does his lady smile, pleasing her eye
With all his sorrowing ? He sees her not.
But who so stares on him ? His sister
sure ! 800

Peona of the woods ! — Can she endure —
Impossible — how dearly they embrace !
His lady smiles ; delight is in her face ;
It is no treachery.

'Dear brother mine !

Endymion, weep not so ! Why shouldst
thou pine

When all great Latmos so exalt will be ?
Thank the great gods, and look not bit-
terly ;

And speak not one pale word, and sigh no
more.

Sure I will not believe thou hast such store
Of grief, to last thee to my kiss again. 810
Thou surely canst not bear a mind in pain,
Come hand in hand with one so beauti-
ful.

Be happy both of you ! for I will pull
The flowers of autumn for your coronals.
Pan's holy priest for young Endymion calls ;
And when he is restored, thou, fairest
dame,

Shalt be our queen. Now, is it not a shame
To see ye thus, — not very, very sad ?

Perhaps ye are too happy to be glad :
O feel as if it were a common day ; 820

Free-voiced as one who never was away.
No tongue shall ask, Whence come ye ? but
ye shall

Be gods of your own rest imperial.
Not even I, for one whole month, will pry
Into the hours that have pass'd us by,

Since in my labour I did sing to thee.
O Hermes ! on this very night will be
A hymning up to Cynthia, queen of light ;
For the soothsayers old saw yesternight
Good visions in the air, — whence will be-
fall, 830

As say these sages, health perpetual
To shepherds and their flocks ; and further-
more,

In Dian's face they read the gentle lore :
Therefore for her these vesper-carols are.
Our friends will all be there from nigh and
far.

Many upon thy death have ditties made ;
And many, even now, their foreheads shade
With cypress, on a day of sacrifice.
New singing for our maids shalt thou devise,
And pluck the sorrow from our huntsmen's
brows. 840

Tell me, my lady-queen, how to espouse
This wayward brother to his rightful joys !
His eyes are on thee bent, as thou didst
poise

His fate most goddess-like. Help me, I
 pray,
 To lure — Endymion, dear brother, say
 What ails thee ?' He could bear no more,
 and so
 Bent his soul fiercely like a spiritual bow,
 And twang'd it inwardly, and calmly said:
 I would have thee my only friend, sweet
 maid !
 My only visitor ! not ignorant though, 850
 That those deceptions which for pleasure
 go
 Mong men, are pleasures real as real may
 be:
 But there are higher ones I may not see,
 If impiously an earthly realm I take.
 Since I saw thee, I have been wide awake
 Night after night, and day by day, until
 Of the empyrean I have drunk my fill.
 Let it content thee, Sister, seeing me
 More happy than betides mortality.
 A hermit young, I'll live in mossy cave, 860
 Where thou alone shalt come to me, and
 lave
 thy spirit in the wonders I shall tell.
 Through me the shepherd realm shall pro-
 sper well;
 For to thy tongue will I all health confide.
 And, for my sake, let this young maid abide
 With thee as a dear sister. Thou alone,
 Peona, mayst return to me. I own
 This may sound strangely: but when, dear-
 est girl,
 Thou seest it for my happiness, no pearl
 Will trespass down those cheeks. Compan-
 ion fair ! 870
 Wilt be content to dwell with her, to share
 This sister's love with me ?' Like one re-
 sign'd
 And bent by circumstance, and thereby
 blind
 In self-commitment, thus that meek un-
 known:
 'Aye, but a buzzing by my ears has flown,
 Of jubilee to Dian: — truth I heard !
 Well then, I see there is no little bird,
 Tender soever, but is Jove's own care.
 Long have I sought for rest, and, unaware,

Behold I find it ! so exalted too ! 880
 So after my own heart ! I knew, I knew
 There was a place untenanted in it;
 In that same void white Chastity shall sit,
 And monitor me nightly to lone slumber.
 With sanest lips I vow me to the number
 Of Dian's sisterhood; and, kind lady,
 With thy good help, this very night shall
 see
 My future days to her fane consecrate.'
 As feels a dreamer what doth most cre-
 ate
 His own particular fright, so these three
 felt: 890
 Or like one who, in after ages, knelt
 To Lucifer or Baal, when he'd pine
 After a little sleep: or when in mine
 Far under-ground, a sleeper meets his
 friends
 Who know him not. Each diligently bends
 Towards common thoughts and things for
 very fear;
 Striving their ghastly malady to cheer,
 By thinking it a thing of yes and no,
 That housewives talk of. But the spirit-
 blow
 Was struck, and all were dreamers. At
 the last 900
 Endymion said: 'Are not our fates all
 cast ?
 Why stand we here ? Adieu, ye tender
 pair !
 Adieu !' Whereat those maidens, with
 wild stare,
 Walk'd dizzily away. Pained and hot
 His eyes went after them, until they got
 Near to a cypress grove, whose deadly
 maw,
 In one swift moment, would what then he
 saw
 Engulf for ever. 'Stay,' he cried, 'ah,
 stay !
 Turn, damsels ! hist ! one word I have to
 say:
 Sweet Indian, I would see thee once again.
 It is a thing I dote on: so I'd fain, 910
 Peona, ye should hand in hand repair,

Into those holy groves that silent are
Behind great Dian's temple. I'll be yon,
At Vesper's earliest twinkle — they are
gone —

But once, once, once again — ' At this he
press'd

His hands against his face, and then did
rest

His head upon a mossy hillock green,
And so remain'd as he a corpse had been
All the long day; save when he scanty
lifted 920

His eyes abroad, to see how shadows shifted
With the slow move of time, — sluggish
and weary

Until the poplar tops, in journey dreary,
Had reach'd the river's brim. Then up he
rose,

And, slowly as that very river flows,
Walk'd towards the temple grove with this
lament:

' Why such a golden eve? The breeze is
sent

Careful and soft, that not a leaf may fall
Before the serene father of them all
Bows down his summer head below the
west. 930

Now am I of breath, speech, and speed
possest,

But at the setting I must bid adieu
To her for the last time. Night will-strew
On the damp grass myriads of lingering
leaves,

And with them shall I die; nor much it
grieves

To die, when summer dies on the cold
sward.

Why, I have been a butterfly, a lord
Of flowers, garlands, love-knots, silly po-
sies,

Groves, meadows, melodies, and arbour-
roses; 939

My kingdom 's at its death, and just it is
That I should die with it: so in all this
We miscall grief, bale, sorrow, heart-break,
woe,

What is there to plain of? By Titan's foe
I am but rightly served.' So saying, he

Tripp'd lightly on, in sort of deathful glee;
Laughing at the clear stream and setting
sun,

As though they jests had been: nor had he
done

His laugh at nature's holy countenance,
Until that grove appear'd, as if perchance,
And then his tongue with sober seemlihd
Gave utterance as he enter'd: 'Ha!' I
said, 951

' King of the butterflies; but by this gloom,
And by old Rhadamanthus' tongue of doom,
This dusk religion, pomp of solitude,
And the Promethean clay by thief endued,
By old Saturnus' forelock, by his head
Shook with eternal palsy, I did wed
Myself to things of light from infancy;
And thus to be cast out, thus lorn to die,
Is sure enough to make a mortal man 960
Grow impious.' So he inwardly began
On things for which no wording can be
found;

Deeper and deeper sinking, until drown'd
Beyond the reach of music: for the choir
Of Cynthia he heard not, though rough
brier

Nor muffling thicket interposed to dull
The vesper hymn, far swollen, soft and full,
Through the dark pillars of those sylvan
aisles.

He saw not the two maidens, nor their
smiles,

Wan as primroses gather'd at midnight 971
By chilly-finger'd spring. 'Unhappy wight!
Endymion!' said Peona, 'we are here!
What wouldst thou ere we all are laid on
bier?'

Then he embraced her, and his lady's hand
Press'd, saying: 'Sister, I would have com-
mand,

If it were heaven's will, on our sad fate.'
At which that dark-eyed stranger stood
elate

And said, in a new voice, but sweet as love,
To Endymion's amaze: 'By Cupid's dove,
And so thou shalt! and by the lily truth
Of my own breast thou shalt, beloved
youth!' 981

And as she spake, into her face there
came

Light, as reflected from a silver flame:
Her long black hair swell'd ampler, in dis-
play

Full golden; in her eyes a brighter day
Dawn'd blue, and full of love. Aye, he
beheld

Phœbe, his passion! joyous she upheld
Her lucid bow, continuing thus: "Drear,
drear

Has our delaying been; but foolish fear
Withheld me first; and then decrees of
fate; ⁹⁹⁰

And then 't was fit that from this mortal
state

Thou shouldst, my love, by some unlook'd-
for change

Be spiritualized. Peona, we shall range
These forests, and to thee they safe shall be
As was thy cradle; hither shalt thou flee
To meet us many a time.' Next Cynthia
bright

Peona kiss'd, and bless'd with fair good
night:

Her brother kiss'd her too, and knelt adown
Before his goddess, in a blissful swoon. ⁹⁹⁹
She gave her fair hands to him, and behold,
Before three swiftest kisses he had told,
They vanish'd far away! — Peona went
Home through the gloomy wood in won-
derment.

THE POEMS OF 1818-1819

The most pregnant year of Keats's genius was that which dates roughly from the spring of 1818 to the spring of 1819, as one may readily see who scans the titles of the poems included in this division. The group here given, beginning with *Isabella*

and closing with *Lamia*, includes, besides those poems and *The Eve of St. Agnes*, the great Odes, *Fancy*, and some of the notable Sonnets. The division, besides being a convenient one, seems almost logical and not merely chronological.

ISABELLA, OR THE POT OF BASIL

A STORY FROM BOCCACCIO

Keats and Reynolds projected a volume of metrical tales translated from or based on Boccaccio. Apparently, Keats began *Isabella*, which was to be one of his contributions, some time before he went to Teignmouth, where he finished *Endymion*. At any rate, from that place April 27, 1818, he wrote to Reynolds, who was then quite ill: 'I have written for my folio Shakespeare, in which there are the first few stanzas of my *Pot of Basil*. I have the rest here finished, and will copy the whole out fairly shortly, and George will bring it you — The compliment is paid by us to Boccace, whether we publish or no: so there is content in this world — *mine* is short — you must be deliberatè about yours; you must not think of it till many months after you are quite well: then put your passion to it, and I shall be bound up with you in the shadows of Mind, as we are in our matters of human life.' Keats did not wait for Reynolds, but published his *Isabella* in the volume entitled *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and other Poems* issued in the summer of 1820.

I

FAIR Isabel, poor simple Isabel!

Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye!
They could not in the self-same mansion
dwell

Without some stir of heart, some mal-
ady;

They could not sit at meals but feel how
well

It soothed each to be the other by;
They could not, sure, beneath the same
roof sleep
But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

II

With every morn their love grew tenderer,
With every eve deeper and tenderer still;
He might not in house, field, or garden
stir,
But her full shape would all his seeing
fill;

And his continual voice was pleasanter
To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill;
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the
same.

III

He knew whose gentle hand was at the
latch,

Before the door had given her to his
eyes;

And from her chamber-window he would
catch

Her beauty farther than the falcon spies;
And constant as her vespers would he
watch,

Because her face was turn'd to the same
skies;

And with sick longing all the night out-
wear,

To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

IV

A whole long month of May in this sad
plight

Made their cheeks paler by the break of
June:

'To-morrow will I bow to my delight,
To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon.' —
'O may I never see another night,
Lorenzo, if thy lips breathe not love's
tune.' —

So spake they to their pillows; but, alas,
Honeyless days and days did he let pass;

V

Until sweet Isabella's untouch'd cheek
Fell sick within the rose's just domain,
Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth
seek

By every lull to cool her infant's pain:
'How ill she is!' said he, 'I may not
speak,

And yet I will, and tell my love all plain:
If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her
tears,

And at the least 't will startle off her
cares.'

VI

So said he one fair morning, and all day
His heart beat awfully against his side;
And to his heart he inwardly did pray
For power to speak; but still the ruddy
tide

Stifled his voice, and pulsed resolve away —
Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,
Yet brought him to the meekness of a
child:

Alas! when passion is both meek and wild!

VII

So once more he had waked and anguished
A dreary night of love and misery,
If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed
To every symbol on his forehead high:
She saw it waxing very pale and dead,
And straight all flush'd; so, lisped ten-
derly,

'Lorenzo!' — here she ceased her timid
quest,

But in her tone and look he read the rest.

VIII

'O Isabella, I can half perceive
That I may speak my grief into thine ear;
If thou didst ever any thing believe,
Believe how I love thee, believe how
near

My soul is to its doom: I would not grieve
Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would
not fear

Thine eyes by gazing; but I cannot live
Another night, and not my passion shrive.

IX

'Love! thou art leading me from wintry
cold,

Lady! thou leadest me to summer clime,
And I must taste the blossoms that unfold
In its ripe warmth this gracious morning
time.'

So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,
And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme:
Great bliss was with them, and great hap-
piness

Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

X

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,
Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart
Only to meet again more close, and share
The inward fragrance of each other's
heart.

She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair
Sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart;
He with light steps went up a western hill,
And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his
fill.

XI

All close they met again, before the dusk
Had taken from the stars its pleasant
veil,

All close they met, all eves, before the dusk
Had taken from the stars its pleasant
veil,

Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,
Unknown of any, free from whispering
tale.

Ah! better had it been for ever so,
Than idle ears should pleasure in their
woe.

XII

Were they unhappy then? — It cannot
be —

Too many tears for lovers have been
shed,

Too many sighs give we to them in fee,

Too much of pity after they are dead,

Too many doleful stories do we see,

Whose matter in bright gold were best
be read;

Except in such a page where Theseus'
spouse

Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

XIII

But, for the general award of love,

The little sweet doth kill much bitter-
ness;

Though Dido silent is in under-grove,

And Isabella's was a great distress,

Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian
clove

Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the
less —

Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-
bowers,

Know there is richest juice in poison-
flowers.

XIV

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,

Enriched from ancestral merchandise,

And for them many a weary hand did swelt

In torched mines and noisy factories,

And many once proud-quiver'd loins did
melt

In blood from stinging whip; — with
hollow eyes

Many all day in dazzling river stood,

To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

XV

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
And went all naked to the hungry shark;
For them his ears gush'd blood; for them
in death

The seal on the cold ice with piteous
bark

Lay full of darts; for them alone did
seethe

A thousand men in troubles wide and
dark:

Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and
peel.

XVI

Why were they proud? Because their
marble founts

Gush'd with more pride than do a
wretch's tears? —

Why were they proud? Because fair
orange-mounts

Were of more soft ascent than lazar
stairs? —

Why were they proud? Because red-
lined accounts

Were richer than the songs of Grecian
years? —

Why were they proud? again we ask
aloud,

Why in the name of Glory were they
proud?

XVII

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired

In hungry pride and gainful cowardice,

As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,

Paled in and vineyarded from beggar-
spies;

The hawks of ship-mast forests — the un-
tired

And pannier'd mules for ducats and old
lies —

Quick cat's-paws on the generous stray-
away, —

Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

XVIII

How was it these same ledger-men could
spy

Fair Isabella in her downy nest?

How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye
A straying from his toil? Hot Egypt's
pest

Into their vision covetous and sly!

How could these money-bags see east
and west? —

Yet so they did — and every dealer fair
Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

XIX

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio!

Of thee we now should ask forgiving
boon,

And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,

And of thy roses amorous of the moon,

And of thy lilies, that do paler grow

Now they can no more hear thy ghitttern's
tune,

For venturing syllables that ill beseem
The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

XX

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale
Shall move on soberly, as it is meet;

There is no other crime, no mad assail

To make old prose in modern rhyme
more sweet:

But it is done — succeed the verse or fail —

To honour thee, and thy gone spirit
greet;

To stead thee as a verse in English tongue,
An echo of thee in the north-wind sung.

XXI

These brethren having found by many
signs

What love Lorenzo for their sister had,

And how she loved him too, each unconfines

His bitter thoughts to other, well-nigh
mad

That he, the servant of their trade designs,
Should in their sister's love be blithe and
glad,

When 't was their plan to coax her by de-
grees

To some high noble and his olive-trees.

XXII

And many a jealous conference had they,

And many times they bit their lips alone,

Before they fix'd upon a surest way

To make the youngster for his crime
atone;

And at the last, these men of cruel clay

Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone;

For they resolved in some forest dim

To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

XXIII

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant

Into the sunrise, o'er the balustrade

Of the garden-terrace, towards him they
bent

Their footing through the dew; and to
him said,

'You seem there in the quiet of content,

Lorenzo, and we are most loth to invade

Calm speculation; but if you are wise,
Bestride your steed while cold is in the skies.

XXIV

'To-day we purpose, aye, this hour we
mount

To spur three leagues towards the Apen-
nine;

Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun
count

His dewy rosary on the eglantine.'

Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,

Bow'd a fair greeting to these serpents'
whine;

And went in haste, to get in readiness,

With belt, and spur, and bracing hunts-
man's dress.

XXV

And as he to the court-yard pass'd along,

Each third step did he pause, and lis-
ten'd oft

If he could hear his lady's matin-song,

Or the light whisper of her footstep soft;

And as he thus over his passion hung,
 He heard a laugh full musical aloft;
 When, looking up, he saw her features
 bright
 Smile through an in-door lattice, all delight.

XXVI

'Love, Isabell!' said he, 'I was in pain
 Lest I should miss to bid thee a good
 morrow:

Ah! what if I should lose thee, when so
 fain

I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow
 Of a poor three hours' absence? but we'll
 gain

Out of the amorous dark what day doth
 borrow.

Good bye! I'll soon be back.' — 'Good
 bye!' said she: —

And as he went she chanted merrily.

XXVII

So the two brothers and their murder'd
 man

Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's
 stream

Gurges through straighten'd banks, and
 still doth fan

Itself with dancing bulrush, and the
 beam

Keeps head against the freshets. Sick and
 wan

The brothers' faces in the ford did seem,
 Lorenzo's flush with love. — They pass'd the
 water

Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

XXVIII

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,
 There in that forest did his great love
 cease;

Ah! when a soul doth thus its freedom
 win,

It aches in loneliness — is ill at peace
 As the break-covert bloodhounds of such
 sin:

They dipp'd their swords in the water,
 and did tease

Their horses homeward, with convulsed
 spur,
 Each richer by his being a murderer.

XXIX

They told their sister how, with sudden
 speed,

Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,
 Because of some great urgency and need
 In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.

Poor Girl! put on thy stifling widow's weed,
 And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed
 bands;

To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,
 And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

XXX

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be;
 Sorely she wept until the night came on,
 And then, instead of love, O misery!

She brooded o'er the luxury alone:
 His image in the dusk she seem'd to see,
 And to the silence made a gentle moan,
 Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,
 And on her couch low murmuring,
 'Where? O where?'

XXXI

But Selfishness, Love's cousin, held not long
 Its fiery vigil in her single breast;
 She fretted for the golden hour, and hung
 Upon the time with feverish unrest —
 Not long — for soon into her heart a throng
 Of higher occupants, a richer zest,
 Came tragic; passion not to be subdued,
 And sorrow for her love in travels rude.

XXXII

In the mid days of autumn, on their eves
 The breath of Winter comes from far
 away,

And the sick west continually bereaves
 Of some gold tinge, and plays a rounde-
 lay

Of death among the bushes and the leaves,
 To make all bare before he dares to stray
 From his north cavern. So sweet Isabel
 By gradual decay from beauty fell,

XXXIII

Because Lorenzo came not. Oftentimes
 She ask'd her brothers, with an eye all
 pale,
 Striving to be itself, what dungeon climes
 Could keep him off so long? They spake
 a tale
 Time after time, to quiet her. Their
 crimes

Came on them, like a smoke from Hin-
 nom's vale;
 And every night in dreams they groan'd
 aloud,
 To see their sister in her snowy shroud.

XXXIV

And she had died in drowsy ignorance,
 But for a thing more deadly dark than
 all;
 It came like a fierce potion, drunk by
 chance,
 Which saves a sick man from the feath-
 er'd pall
 For some few gasping moments; like a
 lance,
 Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall
 With cruel pierce, and bringing him again
 Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and
 brain.

XXXV

It was a vision. — In the drowsy gloom,
 The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot
 Lorenzo stood, and wept: the forest tomb
 Had marr'd his glossy hair which once
 could shoot
 Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom
 Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute
 From his lorn voice, and past his loamed
 ears
 Had made a miry channel for his tears.

XXXVI

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow
 spake;
 For there was striving, in its piteous
 tongue,

To speak as when on earth it was awake,
 And Isabella on its music hung:
 Languor there was in it, and tremulous
 shake,
 As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung;
 And through it moan'd a ghostly under-
 song,
 Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars
 among.

XXXVII

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy
 bright
 With love, and kept all phantom fear
 aloof
 From the poor girl by magic of their light,
 The while it did unthread the horrid
 woof
 Of the late darken'd time, — the murder-
 ous spite
 Of pride and avarice, — the dark pine
 roof
 In the forest, — and the sodden turfed
 dell,
 Where, without any word, from stabs he
 fell.

XXXVIII

Saying moreover, 'Isabel, my sweet!
 Red whortleberries droop above my
 head,
 And a large flint-stone weighs upon my
 feet;
 Around me beeches and high chestnuts
 shed
 Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheepfold
 bleat
 Comes from beyond the river to my bed:
 Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,
 And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

XXXIX

'I am a shadow now, alas! alas!
 Upon the skirts of human nature dwell-
 ing
 Alone: I chant alone the holy mass,
 While little sounds of life are round me
 knelling,

And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,
 And many a chapel bell the hour is telling,
 Paining me through: those sounds grow
 strange to me,
 And thou art distant in Humanity.

XL

'I know what was, I feel full well what is,
 And I should rage, if spirits could go
 mad;
 Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss,
 That paleness warms my grave, as
 though I had
 A Seraph chosen from the bright abyss
 To be my spouse: thy paleness makes
 me glad;
 Thy beauty grows upon me, and I feel
 A greater love through all my essence
 steal.'

XLI

The Spirit mourn'd 'Adieu!' — dissolved,
 and left
 The atom darkness in a slow turmoil;
 As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,
 Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless
 toil,
 We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft,
 And see the spangly gloom froth up and
 boil:
 It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,
 And in the dawn she started up awake

XLII

'Ha! ha!' said she, 'I knew not this hard
 life,
 I thought the worst was simple misery;
 I thought some Fate with pleasure or with
 strife
 Portion'd us — happy days, or else to
 die;
 But there is crime — a brother's bloody
 knife!
 Sweet Spirit, thou hast school'd my infancy:
 I'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes,
 And greet thee morn and even in the skies.'

XLIII

When the full morning came, she had devised
 How she might secret to the forest hie;
 How she might find the clay, so dearly
 prized,
 And sing to it one latest lullaby;
 How her short absence might be unsur-
 mised,
 While she the inmost of the dream would
 try.
 Resolved, she took with her an aged nurse,
 And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

XLIV

See, as they creep along the river side,
 How she doth whisper to that aged
 Dame,
 And, after looking round the champaign
 wide,
 Shows her a knife. — 'What feverous
 hectic flame
 Burns in thee, child? — what good can
 thee betide,
 That thou shouldst smile again?' —
 The evening came,
 And they had found Lorenzo's earthy bed;
 The flint was there, the berries at his head.

XLV

Who hath not loiter'd in a green church-
 yard,
 And let his spirit, like a demon-mole,
 Work through the clayey soil and gravel
 hard,
 To see skull, coffin'd bones, and funeral
 stole;
 Pitying each form that hungry Death hath
 marr'd,
 And filling it once more with human soul?
 Ah! this is holiday to what was felt
 When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt.

XLVI

She gazed into the fresh-thrown mould, as
 though
 One glance did fully all its secrets tell;

Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know
 Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well;
 Upon the murderous spot she seem'd to
 grow,

Like to a native lily of the dell:
 Then with her knife, all sudden, she began
 To dig more fervently than misers can.

XLVII

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon
 Her silk had play'd in purple phantasies:

She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than
 stone,

And put it in her bosom, where it dries
 And freezes utterly unto the bone
 Those dainties made to still an infant's
 cries;

Then 'gan she work again; nor stay'd her
 care,

But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

XLVIII

That old nurse stood beside her wonder-
 ing,

Until her heart felt pity to the core
 At sight of such a dismal labouring,

And so she kneeled, with her locks all
 hoar,

And put her lean hands to the horrid
 thing:

Three hours they labour'd at this travail
 sore:

At last they felt the kernel of the grave,
 And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

XLIX

Ah! wherefore all this wormy circum-
 stance?

Why linger at the yawning tomb so
 long?

O for the gentleness of old Romance,
 The simple plaining of a minstrel's song!

Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,
 For here, in truth, it doth not well be-
 long

To speak:—O turn thee to the very tale,
 And taste the music of that vision pale.

L

With duller steel than the Perséan sword
 They cut away no formless monster's
 head,

But one, whose gentleness did well accord
 With death, as life. The ancient harps
 have said,

Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord:

If Love impersonate was ever dead,

Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.

'T was love; cold,—dead indeed, but not
 dethron'd.

LI

In anxious secrecy they took it home,

And then the prize was all for Isabel:

She calm'd its wild hair with a golden
 comb,

And all around each eye's sepulchral cell
 Pointed each fringed lash; the smeared
 loam

With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,
 She drench'd away: and still she comb'd,
 and kept

Sighing all day—and still she kiss'd and
 wept.

LII

Then in a silken scarf,—sweet with the
 dews

Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby,
 And divine liquids come with odorous ooze
 Through the cold serpent-pipe refresh-
 fully,—

She wrapp'd it up; and for its tomb did
 choose

A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,
 And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set
 Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

LIII

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and
 sun,

And she forgot the blue above the trees,
 And she forgot the dells where waters
 run,

And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze;

She had no knowledge when the day was
done,
And the new morn she saw not: but in
peace
Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.

LIV

And so she ever fed it with thin tears,
Whence thick, and green, and beautiful
it grew,
So that it smelt more balmy than its peers
Of Basil-tufts in Florence; for it drew
Nurture besides, and life, from human
fears,
From the fast mouldering head there
shut from view:
So that the jewel, safely casketed,
Came forth, and in perfumed leafits spread.

LV

O Melancholy, linger here awhile !
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !
O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle,
Unknown, Lethæan, sigh to us — O sigh !
Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and
smile;
Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,
And make a pale light in your cypress
glooms,
Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs.

LVI

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,
From the deep throat of sad Melpomene !
Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,
And touch the strings into a mystery;
Sound mournfully upon the winds and low;
For simple Isabel is soon to be
Among the dead: She withers, like a palm
Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

LVII

O leave the palm to wither by itself;
Let not quick Winter chill its dying
hour ! —
It may not be — those Bælitæ of pelf,
Her brethren, noted the continual shower

From her dead eyes; and many a curious
elf,
Among her kindred, wonder'd that such
dower
Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside
By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

LVIII

And, furthermore, her brethren wonder'd
much
Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,
And why it flourish'd, as by magic touch;
Greatly they wonder'd what the thing
might mean:
They could not surely give belief, that such
A very nothing would have power to
wean
Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures
gay,
And even remembrance of her love's delay.

LIX

Therefore they watch'd a time when they
might sift
This hidden whim; and long they watch'd
in vain;
For seldom did she go to chapel-shrift,
And seldom felt she any hunger-pain:
And when she left, she hurried back, as
swift
As bird on wing to breast its eggs again:
And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there
Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

LX

Yet they contrived to steal the Basil-pot,
And to examine it in secret place:
The thing was vile with green and livid
spot,
And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face:
The guerdon of their murder they had got,
And so left Florence in a moment's space,
Never to turn again. — Away they went,
With blood upon their heads, to banishment.

LXI

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away !
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !

Echo, Echo, on some other day,
From isles Lethean, sigh to us — O
sigh !

Spirits of grief, sing not your 'Well-a-
way !'

For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die;
Will die a death too lone and incomplete,
Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

LXII

Tenuous she look'd on dead and senseless
things,

Asking for her lost Basil amorously:
And with melodious chuckle in the strings
Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would
cry

After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,
To ask him where her Basil was; and why
Was hid from her: 'For cruel 'tis,' said
she,

To steal my Basil-pot away from me.'

LXIII

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,
Exploring for her Basil to the last.
No heart was there in Florence but did
mourn

In pity of her love, so overcast.
And a sad ditty of this story born
From mouth to mouth through all the
country pass'd :

Still is the burthen sung — 'O cruelty,
To steal my Basil-pot away from me !'

TO HOMER

The date 1818 was affixed to this by Lord
Boughton in *Life, Letters and Literary Re-
mains*, where it was first published, and is found
so where it occurs in the Dilke manuscripts.
A letter to Reynolds, dated April 27, 1818,
Keats writes eagerly of his desire to study
Greek.

STANDING aloof in giant ignorance,
Of thee I hear and of the Cyclades,
One who sits ashore and longs perchance
To visit dolphin-coral in deep seas.

So thou wast blind ! — but then the veil
was rent,

For Jove uncurtain'd Heaven to let thee
live,

And Neptune made for thee a spumy tent,
And Pan made sing for thee his forest-
hive;

Ay on the shores of darkness there is
light,

And precipices show untrodden green;
There is a budding morrow in midnight;
There is a triple sight in blindness
keen:

Such seeing hadst thou, as it once befell
To Dian, Queen of Earth, and Heaven,
and Hell.

FRAGMENT OF AN ODE TO
MAIA

Copied in a letter to Reynolds, dated May 3,
1818, in which Keats says: 'With respect to
the affections and Poetry you must know by a
sympathy my thoughts that way, and I dare
say these few lines will be but a ratification: I
wrote them on May day — and intend to finish
the ode all in good time;' a purpose appar-
ently never accomplished.

MOTHER of Hermes ! and still youthful
Maia !

May I sing to thee
As thou wast hymned on the shores of
Baiae ?

Or may I woo thee
In earlier Sicilian ? or thy smiles
Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian
isles,

By bards who died content on pleasant
sward,

Leaving great verse unto a little clan ?
O, give me their old vigour, and unheard
Save of the quiet Primrose, and the span

Of heaven and few ears,
Rounded by thee, my song should die away
Content as theirs,

Rich in the simple worship of a day,

SONG

First published in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*, and there dated 1818.

I

HUSH, hush ! tread softly ! hush, hush, my dear !

All the house is asleep, but we know very well

That the jealous, the jealous old bald-pate may hear,

Tho' you've padded his night-cap — O sweet Isabel !

Tho' your feet are more light than a Faery's feet,

Who dances on bubbles where brook-lets meet, —

Hush, hush ! soft tiptoe ! hush, hush, my dear !

For less than a nothing the jealous can hear.

II

No leaf doth tremble, no ripple is there

On the river, — all's still, and the night's sleepy eye

Closes up, and forgets all its Lethean care,

Charm'd to death by the drone of the humming May-fly ;

And the Moon, whether prudish or complaisant,

Has fled to her bower, well knowing I want

No light in the dusk, no torch in the gloom,
But my Isabel's eyes, and her lips pulp'd with bloom.

III

Lift the latch ! ah gently ! ah tenderly — sweet !

We are dead if that latchet gives one little clink !

Well done — now those lips, and a flowery seat —

The old man may sleep, and the planets may wink ;

The shut rose shall dream of our love and awake

Full-blown, and such warmth for the morning take,

The stock-dove shall hatch her soft brace and shall coo,

While I kiss to the melody, aching all through.

VERSES WRITTEN DURING A TOUR IN SCOTLAND

Keats saw his brother George and wife sail from Liverpool at the end of June, 1818 and then set forth with his friend Charles Armitage Brown on a walking tour through Wordsworth's country and into Scotland. The verses included in this section were all sent in letters, chiefly to his brother Tom. He did not include any in the volume which he published in 1820, and they first saw the light when Lord Houghton included them in the *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*. The more off-hand and familiar verses written at this time are given in the Appendix.

I

ON VISITING THE TOMB OF BURNS

Written at Dumfries on the evening of July 1, 1818. 'Burns's tomb,' writes Keats, 'is in the Churchyard corner, not very much to my taste, though on a scale large enough to show they wanted to honour him. This Sonnet I have written in a strange mood, half asleep. I know not how it is, the Clouds, the Sky, the Houses all seem anti-Grecian and anti-Charlemagnish

THE Town, the churchyard, and the setting sun,

The Clouds, the trees, the rounded hills all seem,

Though beautiful, cold — strange — a dream,

I dreamed long ago, now new begun.

The short-lived, paly Summer is but won
From Winter's ague, for one hour's gleam ;

Though sapphire-warm, their Stars do never beam :

All is cold Beauty; pain is never done:
 For who has mind to relish, Minos-wise,
 The Real of Beauty, free from that dead
 hue
 Sickly imagination and sick pride
 Cast wan upon it ! Burns ! with honour
 due
 I oft have honour'd thee. Great
 shadow, hide
 Thy face; I sin against thy native skies.

II

TO AILSA ROCK

The tourists crossed to Ireland for a short trip, and after returning to Scotland, made their way into Ayrshire, entering it a little beyond Cairn. Their walk led them into a long wooded glen. 'At the end,' writes Keats, July 10, 1818, 'we had a gradual ascent and got among the tops of the mountains whence in a little time I descried in the Sea Ailsa Rock, 940 feet high—it was 15 Miles distant and seemed close upon us. The effect of Ailsa with the peculiar perspective of the Sea in connection with the ground we stood on, and the misty rain then falling gave me a complete Idea of a deluge. Ailsa struck me very suddenly—really I was a little alarmed.'

HEARKEN, thou craggy ocean pyramid !
 Give answer from thy voice, the 'sea-
 fowls' screams !
 When were thy shoulders mantled in
 huge streams ?
 When, from the sun, was thy broad fore-
 head hid ?
 How long is 't since the mighty power bid
 Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom
 dreams ?
 Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,
 Or when gray clouds are thy cold coverlid.
 Thou answer'st not; for thou art dead
 asleep;
 Thy life is but two dead eternities—
 The last in air, the former in the deep;
 First with the whales, last with the eagle-
 skies —

Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made
 thee steep,
 Another cannot wake thy giant size.

III

WRITTEN IN THE COTTAGE WHERE
 BURNS WAS BORN

From Kingswell's, July 13, 1818, Keats wrote of his experience in visiting Burns's birthplace: 'The approach to it [Ayr] is extremely fine—quite outwent my expectations—richly meadowed, wooded, heathed and rivuleted—with a grand Sea view terminated by the black Mountains of the isle of Annan. As soon as I saw them so nearby I said to myself, "How is it they did not beckon Burns to some grand attempt at Epic?" The bonny Doon is the sweetest river I ever saw—overhung with fine trees as far as we could see—We stood some time on the Brig across it, over which Tam o' Shanter fled—we took a pinch of snuff on the Keystone—then we proceeded to the "auld Kirk Alloway." As we were looking at it a Farmer pointed the spots where Mungo's Mither hang'd hersel' and "drunken Charlie brake's neck's bane." Then we proceeded to the Cottage he was born in—there was a board to that effect by the door side—it had the same effect as the same sort of memorial at Stratford on Avon. We drank some Toddy to Burns's memory with an old Man who knew Burns—damn him and damn his anecdotes—he was a great bore—it was impossible for a Southron to understand above 5 words in a hundred.—There was something good in his description of Burns's melancholy the last time he saw him. I was determined to write a sonnet in the Cottage—I did—but it was so bad I cannot venture it here.' He wrote in the same strain to Reynolds, saying, 'I wrote a sonnet for the mere sake of writing some lines under the Roof—they are so bad I cannot transcribe them. . . . I cannot write about scenery and visitings—Fancy is indeed less than a present palpable reality, but it is greater than remembrance. . . . One song of Burns's is of more worth to you than all I could think for a whole year in his native country.'

THIS mortal body of a thousand days
 Now fills, O Burns, a space in thine own
 room,
 Where thou didst dream alone on budded
 bays,
 Happy and thoughtless of thy day of
 doom !
 My pulse is warm with thine old Barley-
 bree,
 My head is light with pledging a great
 soul,
 My eyes are wandering, and I cannot see,
 Fancy is dead and drunken at its goal;
 Yet can I stamp my foot upon thy floor,
 Yet can I ope thy window-sash to find
 The meadow thou hast tramped o'er and
 o'er, —
 Yet can I think of thee till thought is
 blind, —
 Yet can I gulp a bumper to thy name, —
 O smile among the shades, for this is fame !

IV

AT FINGAL'S CAVE

The verses which follow were first printed in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*. They occur in a letter to Tom Keats from Oban, July 26, 1818, and were preceded by this description: 'I am puzzled how to give you an Idea of Staffa. It can only be represented by a first-rate drawing. One may compare the surface of the Island to a roof — this roof is supported by grand pillars of basalt standing together as thick as honeycombs. The finest thing is Fingal's cave — it is entirely a hollowing out of Basalt Pillars. Suppose now the Giants who rebelled against Jove had taken a whole Mass of black Columns and bound them together like bunches of matches — and then with immense axes had made a cavern in the body of these columns — Of course the roof and floor must be composed of the broken ends of the Columns — such is Fingal's cave, except that the Sea has done the work of excavations, and is continually dashing there — so that we walk along the sides of the cave on the pillars which are left as if for convenient stairs. The

roof is arched somewhat gothic-wise, and the length of some of the entire side-pillars is fifty feet. About the island you might seat an army of men each on a pillar. The length of the Cave is 120 feet, and from its extremity the view into the sea, through the large arch at the entrance — the colour of the column is a sort of black with a lurking gloom of purple therein. For solemnity and grandeur it far surpasses the finest Cathedral. At the extremity of the Cave there is a small perforation into another Cave, at which the waters meeting and buffeting each other there is sometimes produced a report as of a cannon heard as far as Iona, which must be 12 miles. As we approached in the boat, there was such a fine swell of the sea that the pillars appeared rising immediately out of the crystal. But it is impossible to describe it.'

NOT Aladdin magian
 Ever such a work began;
 Not the wizard of the Dee
 Ever such a dream could see;
 Not St. John, in Patmos' isle,
 In the passion of his toil,
 When he saw the churches seven,
 Golden aisled, built up in heaven,
 Gazed at such a rugged wonder,
 As I stood its roofing under.
 Lo ! I saw one sleeping there,
 On the marble cold and bare;
 While the surges wash'd his feet,
 And his garments white did beat
 Drench'd about the sombre rocks;
 On his neck his well-grown locks,
 Lifted dry above the main,
 Were upon the curl again.
 'What is this ? and what art thou ?'
 Whisper'd I, and touch'd his brow;
 'What art thou ? and what is this ?'
 Whisper'd I, and strove to kiss
 The spirit's hand, to wake his eyes;
 Up he started in a trice:
 'I am Lycidas,' said he,
 'Famed in funeral minstrelsy !
 This was architected thus
 By the great Oceanus ! —
 Here his mighty waters play

Hollow organs all the day;
 Here, by turns, his dolphins all,
 Finny palmers, great and small,
 Come to pay devotion due, —
 Each a mouth of pearls must strew !
 Many a mortal of these days
 Dares to pass our sacred ways;
 Dares to touch, audaciously,
 This cathedral of the sea !
 I have been the pontiff-priest,
 Where the waters never rest,
 Where a fledgy sea-bird choir
 Soars for ever ! Holy fire
 I have hid from mortal man;
 Proteus is my Sacristan !
 But the dulled eye of mortal
 Hath pass'd beyond the rocky portal;
 So for ever will I leave
 Such a taint, and soon unweave
 All the magic of the place.'
 So saying, with a Spirit's glance
 He dived !

v

WRITTEN UPON THE TOP OF BEN NEVIS

Enclosed in a letter to Tom Keats from
 Letter Findlay, August 3, 1818.

READ me a lesson, Muse, and speak it loud
 Upon the top of Nevis, blind in mist !
 I look into the chasms, and a shroud
 Vaporous doth hide them, — just so
 much I wist
 Mankind do know of hell; I look o'erhead,
 And there is sullen mist, — even so much
 Mankind can tell of heaven; mist is spread
 Before the earth, beneath me, — even
 such,
 Even so vague is man's sight of himself !
 Here are the craggy stones beneath my
 feet, —
 Thus much I know that, a poor witless elf,
 I tread on them, — that all my eye doth
 meet
 Is mist and crag, not only on this height,
 But in the world of thought and mental
 might !

TRANSLATION FROM A SONNET
OF RONSARD

Published in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains* in a letter to Reynolds, of which the probable date is September 22, 1818; in a letter to Charles Wentworth Dilke September 21, 1818, Keats quotes the last line with the remark: 'You have passed your Romance, and I never gave in to it, or else I think this line a feast for one of your Lovers.'

NATURE withheld Cassandra in the skies,
 For more adornment, a full thousand
 years;
 She took their cream of Beauty's fairest
 dyes,
 And shaped and tinted her above all
 Peers:
 Meanwhile Love kept her dearly with his
 wings,
 And underneath their shadow fill'd her
 eyes
 With such a richness that the cloudy Kings
 Of high Olympus utter'd slavish sighs.
 When from the Heavens I saw her first
 descend,
 My heart took fire, and only burning
 pains,
 They were my pleasures — they my Life's
 sad end;
 Love pour'd her beauty into my warm
 veins.

.

TO A LADY SEEN FOR A FEW
MOMENTS AT VAUXHALL

First published in *Hood's Magazine* for April 1844, and afterward included in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*. No date is given, and the poem is placed here from a fancied association with the lady whom Keats saw at Hastings and who started the train of thought in his letter to his brother and sister, October 26, 1818.

TIME's sea hath been five years at its slow
ebb,

Long hours have to and fro let creep the
sand,

Since I was tangled in thy beauty's web,
And snared by the ungloving of thine
hand.

And yet I never look on midnight sky,
But I behold thine eyes' well-memoried
light;

I cannot look upon the rose's dye,
But to thy cheek my soul doth take its
flight;

I cannot look on any budding flower,
But my fond ear, in fancy at thy lips
And hearkening for a love-sound, doth de-
avour

Its sweets in the wrong sense: — Thou
dost eclipse

Every delight with sweet remembering,
And grief unto my darling joys dost bring.

FANCY

Keats enclosed these lines, as lately written,
in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats,
January 2, 1819. He included the poem in the
1820 volume. Mr. John Knowles Paine has
published a cantata for soprano solo, chorus,
and orchestra, entitled *The Realm of Fancy*,
using these lines for his book.

EVER let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home:
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth;
Then let winged Fancy wander
Through the thought still spread beyond
her:

Open wide the mind's cage-door,
She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
O sweet Fancy! let her loose;
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the Spring
Fades as does its blossoming;
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
Blushing through the mist and dew,
Cloy with tasting: What do then?

Sit thee by the ingle, when
The sear faggot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter's night;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the caked snow is shuffled
From the ploughboy's heavy shoon;
When the Night doth meet the Noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish Even from her sky.
Sit thee there, and send abroad,
With a mind self-overawed,
Fancy, high-commission'd: — send her!
She has vassals to attend her:
She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost;
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather;
All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth:
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it: — thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear;
Rustle of the reaped corn;
Sweet birds antheming the morn:
And, in the same moment — hark!
'Tis the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold;
White-plumed lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst;
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearled with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its celled sleep;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin;
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree,
When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on her mossy nest;

When the hurry and alarm
When the bee-hive casts its swarm;
Corns ripe down-pattering
While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy ! let her loose;
Every thing is spoilt by use;
Where 's the cheek that doth not fade,
Too much gazed at ? Where 's the maid 70
Whose lip mature is ever new ?
Where 's the eye, however blue,
Doth not weary ? Where 's the face
One would meet in every place ?
Where 's the voice, however soft,
One would hear so very oft ?
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Let, then, winged Fancy find 80
Thee a mistress to thy mind:
Oulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter
Ere the God of Torment taught her
How to frown and how to chide;
With a waist and with a side
White as Hebe's, when her zone
Slipt its golden clasp, and down
Fell her kirtle to her feet,
While she held the goblet sweet,
And Jove grew languid. — Break the mesh
Of the Fancy's silken leash; 90
Quickly break her prison-string,
And such joys as these she 'll bring. —
Let the winged Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.

ODE

Written on the blank page before Beaumont and Fletcher's tragi-comedy, *The Fair Maid of the Inn*, and addressed thus to these bards in particular. Sent in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, January 2, 1819. It is included in the 1820 volume.

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth !
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new ?
Yes, and those of heaven commune

With the spheres of sun and moon;
With the noise of fountains wond'rous
And the parle of voices thund'rous;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease 10
Seated on Elysian lawns
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;
Underneath large blue-bells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not;
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless, tranced thing,
But divine melodious truth;
Philosophic numbers smooth; 20
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumber'd, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week; 30
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth !
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new ! 40

SONG

'There is just room, I see, in this page to copy a little thing I wrote off to some Music as it was playing.' Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, January 2, 1819.

I HAD a dove and the sweet dove died;
And I have thought it died of grieving:

O, what could it grieve for? Its feet
 were tied,
 With a silken thread of my own hand's
 weaving;
 Sweet little red feet! why should you
 die —
 Why should you leave me, sweet bird!
 why?
 You lived alone in the forest-tree,
 Why, pretty thing! would you not live
 with me?
 I kiss'd you oft and gave you white peas;
 Why not live sweetly, as in the green
 trees?

ODE ON MELANCHOLY

Published in *Lamia, Isabella, the Eve of St. Agnes and other Poems*, 1820. There is no date affixed to it, but if it takes its color at all from Keats's own experience, it might not be amiss to refer it to the early part of 1819, when he had come under the influence of his passion for Fanny Brawne. In a letter to Haydon, written between January 7 and 14, 1819, Keats says: 'I have been writing a little now and then lately: but nothing to speak of — being discontented and as it were moulting. Yet I do not think I shall ever come to the rope or the pistol. For after a day or two's melancholy, although I smoke more and more my own insufficiency — I see by little and little more of what is to be done, and how it is to be done, should I ever be able to do it.'

Lord Houghton, in the Aldine edition of 1876, makes the following prefatory note: 'A singular instance of Keats's delicate perception occurred in the composition of this Ode. In the original manuscript he had intended to represent the vulgar conception of Melancholy with gloom and horror, in contrast with the emotion that incites to —

"glut thy sorrow on a morning rose
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
 Or on the wealth of globed peonies;"

and which essentially

"lives in Beauty — Beauty that must die,
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
 Bidding adieu."

The first stanza, therefore, was the following: as grim a passage as Blake or Fuseli could have dreamed and painted: —

"Though you should build a bark of dead men's bones,
 And rear a platform gibbet for a mast,
 Stitch shrouds together for a sail, with groans
 To fill it out, blood-stained and aghast;
 Although your rudder be a dragon's tail
 Long sever'd, yet still hard with agony,
 Your cordage large uprootings from the skull
 Of bald Medusa, certes you would fall
 To find the Melancholy — whether she
 Dreameth in any isle of Lethe dull."

But no sooner was this written, than the poet became conscious that the coarseness of the contrast would destroy the general effect of luxurious tenderness which it was the object of the poem to produce, and he confined the gross notion of Melancholy to less violent images, and let the ode at once begin, —

I

No, no! go not to Lethe, neither twist
 Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poison-
 ous wine;
 Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd
 By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
 Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
 Nor let the beetle, or the death-moth be
 Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy
 owl
 A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
 For shade to shade will come too drows-
 ily,
 And drown the wakeful anguish of the
 soul.

II

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping
 cloud,
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
 And hides the green hills in an April
 shroud;
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
 Or on the rainbow of the salt-sand wave,
 Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless
 eyes.

III

She dwells with Beauty — Beauty that
must die ;

And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth
sips:

Aye, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose
strenuous tongue

Can burst Joy's grape against his palate
fine;

His soul shall taste the sadness of her
might,

And be among her cloudy trophies
hung.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

Begin early in 1819. In a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, dated February 14, 1819, Keats says: 'I was nearly a fortnight at Mr. John Snook's and a few days at old Mr. Dilke's (Chichester in Hampshire). Nothing worth speaking of happened at either place. I took down some thin paper and wrote on it a little poem called St. Agnes's Eve.' The poem underwent a great deal of revision, and was not in final form before September; it was published in the 1820 volume.

I

ST. AGNES' EVE — Ah, bitter chill it
was !

The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the
frozen grass,

And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while
he told

His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without
a death,

Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his
prayer he saith.

II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy
man;

Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his
knees,

And back returneth, meagre, barefoot,
wan,

Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem
to freeze,

Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:

Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,

He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods
and mails.

III

Northward he turneth through a little
door,

And scarce three steps, ere Music's
golden tongue

Flatter'd to tears this aged man and
poor;

But no — already had his death-bell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and
sung:

His was harsh penance on St. Agnes'
Eve:

Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's re-
prieve,

And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake
to grieve.

IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the pre-
lude soft;

And so it chanced, for many a door was
wide,

From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to
chide:

The level chambers, ready with their
pride,

Were glowing to receive a thousand
guests:

The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,

Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

V

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
The brain, new-stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adornings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by — she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,

And back retired; not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere;
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amorn,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss — in sooth such things have been.

X

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
For him, those chambers heid barbarian hordes,

Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast af-
fords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Ave one old beldame, weak in body and in
soul.

XI

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature
came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's
flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus
bland:
He startled her; but soon she knew his
face,
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied
hand,
Saying, 'Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee
from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole
bloodthirsty race!

XII

Get hence! get hence! there's dwarf-
ish Hildebrand;
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursed thee and thine, both house and
land:
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not
a whit
More tame for his gray hairs — Alas me!
flit!
Flit like a ghost away.' — 'Ah, Gossip
dear,
We're safe enough; here in this arm-
chair sit,
And tell me how' — 'Good Saints! not
here, not here;
Follow me, child, or else these stones will
be thy bier.'

XIII

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty
plume;

And as she mutter'd 'Well-a — well-a-
day!'

He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
'Now tell me where is Madeline,' said
he,

'O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may
see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving
piously.'

XIV

'St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve —
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and
Fays,
To venture so: it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro! — St. Agnes'
Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror
plays
This very night: good angels her de-
ceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time
to grieve.'

XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth closed a wond'rous riddle-
book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she
told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could
brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchant-
ments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown
rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained
heart

Made purple riot: then doth he propose
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame
 start:
 'A cruel man and impious thou art:
 Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and
 dream
 Alone with her good angels, far apart
 From wicked men like thee. Go, go! I
 deem
 Thou canst not surely be the same that thou
 didst seem.'

XVII

'I will not harm her, by all saints I
 swear,'
 Quoth Porphyro: 'O may I ne'er find
 grace
 When my weak voice shall whisper its
 last prayer,
 If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
 Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
 Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
 Or I will, even in a moment's space,
 Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's
 ears,
 And beard them, though they be more
 fang'd than wolves and bears.'

XVIII

'Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble
 soul?
 A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, church-yard
 thing,
 Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight
 toll;
 Whose prayers for thee, each morn and
 evening,
 Were never miss'd.' Thus plaining, doth
 she bring
 A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
 So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
 That Angela gives promise she will do
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or
 woe.

XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
 Even to Madeline's chamber, and there
 hide

Him in a closet, of such privacy
 That he might see her beauty unespied,
 And win perhaps that night a peerless
 bride,
 While legion'd fairies paced the coverlet,
 And pale enchantment held her sleepy
 eyed.
 Never on such a night have lovers met,
 Since Merlin paid his Demon all the mon-
 strous debt.

XX

'It shall be as thou wishest,' said the
 Dame:
 'All cates and dainties shall be stored
 there
 Quickly on this feast-night: by the tam-
 bour frame
 Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to
 spare,
 For I am slow and feeble, and scarce
 dare
 On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
 Wait here, my child, with patience,
 kneel in prayer
 The while: Ah! thou must needs the
 lady wed,
 Or may I never leave my grave among
 the dead.'

XXI

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.
 The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
 The Dame return'd, and whisper'd in
 his ear
 To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd
 and chaste;
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleased
 amain.
 His poor guide hurried back with agues in
 her brain.

XXII

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,

When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed
maid,
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove
fray'd and fled.

XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine,
died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale
should swell
her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled in
her dell.

XXIV

A casement high and triple arch'd there
was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of
knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint de-
vice,
Innumerable of stains and splendid
dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd
wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand herald-
ries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazon-
ings,
shielded sentcheon blush'd with blood of
queens and kings.

XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry
moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's
fair breast,

As down she knelt for heaven's grace
and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together
prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew
faint;
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from
mortal taint.

XXVI

Anon his heart revives: her vespers
done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she
frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by
one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her
knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and
sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm
is fled.

XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly
nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she
lay,
Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep op-
press'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued
away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-
day;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and
pain;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Pay-
nims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from
rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud
again.

XXVIII

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
 And listen'd to her breathing, if it
 chanced
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
 Which when he heard, that minute did
 he bless,
 And breathed himself: then from the
 closet crept,
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
 And over the hush'd carpet, silent,
 stept,
 And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo !
 — how fast she slept.

XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded
 moon
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
 A table, and, half anguish'd, threw
 thereon
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and
 jet:—
 O for some drowsy Morphean amulet !
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
 Affray his ears, though but in dying
 tone:—
 The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise
 is gone.

XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
 In blanched linen, smooth, and laven-
 der'd,
 While he from forth the closet brought
 a heap
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and
 gourd;
 With jellies soother than the creamy
 curd,
 And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;
 Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
 From Fez; and spiced dainties, every
 one,
 From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Leba-
 non.

XXXI

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing
 hand
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright
 Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they
 stand
 In the retired quiet of the night,
 Filling the chilly room with perfume
 light.—
 'And now, my love, my seraph fair
 awake !
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine ere
 mite:
 Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes
 sake,
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul
 doth ache.'

XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved
 arm
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her
 dream
 By the dusk curtains:—'t was a mid-
 night charm
 Impossible to melt as iced stream:
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight
 gleam;
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet
 lies:
 It seem'd he never, never could redeem
 From such a steadfast spell his lady's
 eyes;
 So mused awhile, entoil'd in woofed phan-
 tasies.

XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow
 lute,—
 Tumultuous,—and, in chords that ten-
 derest be,
 He play'd an ancient ditty, long since
 mute,
 In Provence call'd 'La belle dame sans
 mercy:'
 Close to her ear touching the melody;—
 Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft
 moan:

He ceased — she panted quick — and suddenly
 Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
 There was a painful change, that night expell'd
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
 Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV

'Ah, Porphyro!' said she, 'but even now
 Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
 Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
 And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
 How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
 Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
 Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
 Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
 For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go.'

XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
 Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
 Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose
 Blendeth its odour with the violet, —

Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
 Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
 Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon bath set.

XXXVII

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
 'This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!'
 'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat:
 'No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
 Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine. —
 Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
 I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
 Though thou forsakest a deceived thing; —
 A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing.'

XXXVIII

'My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
 Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
 Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?
 Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
 After so many hours of toil and quest,
 A famish'd pilgrim, — saved by miracle.
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
 Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
 To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX

'Hark! 'tis an elfin storm from faery land,
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
 Arise — arise! the morning is at hand: —
 The bloated wassailers will never heed: —
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed;

There are no ears to hear, or eyes to
see,—
Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy
mead:
Awake ! arise ! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home
for thee.'

XL

She hurried at his words, beset with
fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all
around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready
spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they
found.—
In all the house was heard no human
sound.
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by
each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk,
and hound,
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's up-
roar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty
floor.

XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide
hall;
Like phantoms to the iron porch they
glide,
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook
his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy
slide:—
The chains lie silent on the footworn
stones;—
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges
groans.

XLII

And they are gone: aye, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.

That night the Baron dreamt of many a
woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade
and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-
worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the
old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face
deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes
cold.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Lemprière's classical dictionary made Keats acquainted with the names and attributes of the inhabitants of the heavens in the ancient world, and the Shakesperean Chapman introduced him to Homer, but his acquaintance with the subtlest spirit of Greece was by a more direct means. Keats did not read Greek, and he had no scholar's knowledge of Greek art, but he had the poetic divination which scholars sometimes fail to possess, and when he strolled into the British Museum and saw the Elgin marbles, the greatest remains in continuous series of perhaps the greatest of Greek sculptures, he saw them as an artist of kindred spirit with their makers. He saw them also with the complex emotion of a modern, and read into them his own thoughts. The result is most surely read in his longer poem of *Hyperion*, but the spirit evoked found its finest expression in this ode.

The ode appears to have been composed in the spring of 1819 and first published in January, 1820, in *Annals of the Fine Arts*. There are then about four years in time between the sonnet, 'On first looking into Chapman's Homer,' and this ode; if the former suggests a Balboa, this suggests a Magellan who has traversed the Pacific. It is not needful to find any single piece of ancient sculpture as a model for the poem, although there is at Holland House, where Keats might have seen it, an urn with just such a scene of pastoral sacrifice as is described in the fourth stanza. The ode was included by Keats in *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes and other Poems*.

I

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of Silence and slow
 Time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our
 rhyme:
 What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy
 shape
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
 What men or gods are these? what
 maidens loth?
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to es-
 cape?
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild
 ecstasy?

10

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those un-
 heard
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes,
 play on;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst
 not leave
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be
 bare;
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou
 kiss,
 Though winning near the goal — yet, do
 not grieve;
 She cannot fade, though thou hast not
 thy bliss,

19

For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III

O happy, happy boughs! that cannot
 shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring
 adieu;
 And, happy melodist, unwearied,
 For ever piping songs for ever new;
 More happy love! more happy, happy
 love!
 For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
 For ever panting, and for ever young;

All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and
 cloy'd,
 A burning forehead, and a parching
 tongue.

30

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands
 drest?
 What little town by river or sea shore,
 Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of this folk, this pious
 morn?
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate, can e'er re-
 turn.

40

V

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of
 thought
 As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
 When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other
 woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom
 thou say'st,
 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,' — that is
 all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to
 know.

50

ODE ON INDOLENCE

'They toil not, neither do they spin.'

Published in *Life, Letters and Literary Re-
 mains*. In a letter to George and Georgiana
 Keats, dated March 19, 1819, Keats uses lan-
 guage which shows this poem to have been
 just then in his mind: 'This morning I am in a
 sort of temper, indolent and supremely careless

— I long after a stanza or two of Thomson's Castle of Indolence — my passions are all asleep, from my having slumbered till nearly eleven, and weakened the animal fibre all over me, to a delightful sensation, about three degrees on this side of faintness. If I had teeth of pearl and the breath of lilies I should call it languor, but as I am I must call it laziness. In this state of effeminacy the fibres of the brain are relaxed in common with the rest of the body, and to such a happy degree that pleasure has no show of enticement and pain no unbearable power. Neither Poetry, nor Ambition, nor Love have any alertness of countenance as they pass by me; they seem rather like figures on a Greek vase — a man and two women whom no one but myself could distinguish in their disguise. This is the only happiness, and is a rare instance of the advantage of the body overpowering the Mind.'

I

ONE morn before me were three figures
seen,
With bowed necks, and joined hands,
side-faced;
And one behind the other stepp'd serene,
In placid sandals, and in white robes
graced;
They pass'd, like figures on a marble urn,
When shifted round to see the other
side;
They came again; as when the urn
once more
Is shifted round, the first seen shades re-
turn;
And they were strange to me, as may
betide
With vases, to one deep in Phidian
lore.

II

How is it, Shadows ! that I knew ye
not ?
How came ye muffled in so hush a mask ?
Was it a silent deep-disguised plot
To steal away, and leave without a task
My idle days ? Ripe was the drowsy
hour;

The blissful cloud of summer-indolence
Benumb'd my eyes; my pulse grew
less and less;
Pain had no sting, and pleasure's wreat
no flower:
O, why did ye not melt, and leave m
sense
Unhaunted quite of all but — nothing
ness ?

III

A third time pass'd they by, and, passing
turn'd
Each one the face a moment whiles t
me;
Then faded, and to follow them I burn'd
And ached for wings, because I knew
the three;
The first was a fair Maid, and Love he
name;
The second was Ambition, pale of cheek
And ever watchful with fatigues
eye;
The last, whom I love more, the more o
blame
Is heap'd upon her, maiden most un
meek, —
I knew to be my demon Poesy.

IV

They faded, and, forsooth ! I wanted
wings:
O folly ! What is Love ? and where is
it ?
And for that poor Ambition ! it springs
From a man's little heart's short fever
fit;
For Poesy ! — no, — she has not a joy, —
At least for me, — so sweet as drowsy
noons,
And evenings steep'd in honied indo
lence;
O, for an age so shelter'd from annoy,
That I may never know how change the
moons,
Or hear the voice of busy common
sense !

V

and once more came they by;—alas!
 wherefore?
 My sleep had been embroider'd with dim
 dreams;
 My soul had been a lawn besprinkled
 o'er
 With flowers, and stirring shades, and
 baffled beams:
 The morn was clouded, but no shower fell,
 Tho' in her lids hung the sweet tears of
 May;
 The open casement press'd a new-
 leaved vine,
 Let in the budding warmth and throstle's
 lay;
 Shadows! 't was a time to bid farewell!
 Upon your skirts had fallen no tears
 of mine.

VI

O, ye three Ghosts, adieu! Ye cannot
 raise
 My head cool-bedded in the flowery
 grass;
 Or I would not be dieted with praise,
 A pet-lamb in a sentimental farce!
 Made softly from my eyes and be once
 more
 In masque-like figures on the dreamy
 urn;
 Farewell! I yet have visions for the
 night,
 And for the day faint visions there is store;
 Vanish, ye Phantoms! from my idle
 spright,
 Into the clouds, and nevermore return!

SONNET

Published in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*. In a letter to his brother George and wife, Keats writes March 19, 1819: 'I am ever afraid that your anxiety for me will lead you to fear for the violence of my temperament continually smothered down: for that reason I did not intend to have sent you the following sonnet—but look over the two last

pages [of his letter] and ask yourselves whether I have not that in me which will bear the buffets of the world. It will be the best comment on my sonnet; it will show you that it was written with no Agony but that of ignorance; with no thirst of anything but Knowledge when pushed to the point, though the first steps to it were through my human passions,—they went away and I wrote with my Mind—and perhaps I must confess a little bit of my heart.'

WHY did I laugh to-night? No voice will
 tell;

No God, no Demon of severe response,
 Deigns to reply from Heaven or from Hell:
 Then to my human heart I turn at once.
 Heart! Thou and I are here sad and alone;
 I say, why did I laugh? O mortal pain!
 O Darkness! Darkness! ever must I moan,
 To question Heaven and Hell and Heart
 in vain.

Why did I laugh? I know this Being's
 lease,

My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads;
 Yet would I on this very midnight cease,
 And the world's gaudy ensigns see in
 shreds;

Verse, Fame, and Beauty are intense
 indeed,

But Death intenser—Death is Life's high
 meed.

ODE TO FANNY

First published in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*, and there undated.

PHYSICIAN Nature! let my spirit blood!
 O ease my heart of verse and let me rest;
 Throw me upon thy Tripod, till the flood
 Of stifling numbers ebbs from my full
 breast.

A theme! a theme! great Nature!
 give a theme;

Let me begin my dream.

I come—I see thee, as thou standest there;
 Beckon me not into the wintry air.

Ah! dearest love, sweet home of all my fears,
And hopes, and joys, and panting miseries, —

To-night, if I may guess, thy beauty wears
A smile of such delight,
As brilliant and as bright,
As when with ravished, aching, vassal eyes,
Lost in soft amaze,
I gaze, I gaze!

Who now, with greedy looks, eats up my feast?

What stare outfaces now my silver moon!
Ah! keep that hand unravished at the least;
Let, let the amorous burn —
But, pr'ythee, do not turn
The current of your heart from me so soon.
O! save, in charity,
The quickest pulse for me.

Save it for me, sweet love! though music breathe

Voluptuous visions into the warm air,
Though swimming through the dance's dangerous wreath;
Be like an April day,
Smiling and cold and gay,
A temperate lily, temperate as fair;
Then, Heaven! there will be
A warmer June for me.

Why, this — you'll say, my Fanny! is not true:

Put your soft hand upon your snowy side,
Where the heart beats: confess — 't is nothing new —

Must not a woman be
A feather on the sea,
Sway'd to and fro by every wind and tide?

Of as uncertain speed
As blow-ball from the mead?

I know it — and to know it is despair
To one who loves you as I love, sweet Fanny!

Whose heart goes fluttering for you every where,

Nor, when away you roam,
Dare keep its wretched home:
Love, love alone, has pains severe and many:

Then, loveliest! keep me free
From torturing jealousy.

Ah! if you prize my subdued soul above
The poor, the fading, brief pride of an hour;

Let none profane my Holy See of love,
Or with a rude hand break
The sacramental cake:
Let none else touch the just new-budded flower;
If not — may my eyes close,
Love! on their last repose.

A DREAM, AFTER READING DANTE'S EPISODE OF PAOLO AND FRANCESCA

To George and Georgiana Keats, April 18 or 19, 1819, Keats writes: 'The fifth canto of Dante pleases me more and more — it is the one in which he meets with Paolo and Francesca. I had passed many days in rather low state of mind, and in the midst of them dreamt of being in that region of Hell. The dream was one of the most delightful enjoyments I ever had in my life. I floated about the whirling atmosphere, as it is described, with a beautiful figure, to whose lips mine were joined as it seemed for an age — and in the midst of all this cold and darkness I was warmed — even flowery tree-tops sprung up, and we rested on them, sometimes with the lightness of a cloud, till the wind blew us away again. I tried a sonnet upon it — there are fourteen lines, but nothing of what I felt in it — O that I could dream it every night.' Keats afterwards printed the sonnet in *The Indicator* for June 28, 1820.

As Hermes once took to his feathers light
When lulled Argus, baffled, swoon'd and slept
So on a Delphic reed, my idle spright

So play'd, so charm'd, so conquer'd, so
bereft
e dragon-world of all its hundred eyes;
And, seeing it asleep, so fled away —
st to pure Ida with its snow-cold skies,
Nor unto Tempe where Jove grieved a
day;
t to that second circle of sad hell,
Where 'mid the gust, the whirlwind, and
the flaw
rain and hail-stones, lovers need not tell
Their sorrows. Pale were the sweet lips
I saw,
le were the lips I kiss'd, and fair the form
loated with, about that melancholy storm.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

Sent in a letter to George and Georgiana
eats, April 28, 1819, and printed by Leigh
unt in *The Indicator*, May 10, 1820. Hunt
ys the poem was suggested by that title at
e head of a translation from Alan Chartier
the end of Chaucer's works.

I

h, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering?
he sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

II

h, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
he squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

III

see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew;
nd on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

IV

met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful — a faery's child;
er hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

V

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

VI

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

VII

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew;
And sure in language strange she said —
'I love thee true.'

VIII

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gazed, and sighed deep,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
So kiss'd to sleep.

IX

And there we slumber'd on the moss,
And there I dream'd — Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill side.

X

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried — 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'
Hath thee in thrall!'

XI

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill side.

XII

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the
lake,
And no birds sing.

CHORUS OF FAIRIES

Inclosed in a letter to George and Georgiana
Keats, April 28, 1819, and printed in *Life,*
Letters and Literary Remains.

FIRE, AIR, EARTH, AND WATER
SALAMANDER, ZEPHYR, DUSKETHA, AND
BREAMA

SALAMANDER

HAPPY, happy glowing fire !

ZEPHYR

Fragrant air ! delicious light !

DUSKETHA

Let me to my glooms retire !

BREAMA

I to green-weed rivers bright !

SALAMANDER

Happy, happy glowing fire !
Dazzling bowers of soft retire,
Ever let my nourish'd wing,
Like a bat's, still wandering,
Faintly fan your fiery spaces,
Spirit sole in deadly places. 10
In unhaunted roar and blaze,
Open eyes that never daze,
Let me see the myriad shapes
Of men, and beasts, and fish, and apes,
Portray'd in many a fiery den,
And wrought by spumy bitumen.
On the deep intenser roof,
Arched every way, aloof,
Let me breathe upon my skies,
And anger their live tapestries; 20
Free from cold, and every care,
Of chilly rain, and shivering air.

ZEPHYR

Spright of Fire ! away ! away !
Or your very roundelay
Will sear my plumage newly budded
From its quilled sheath, and studded
With the self-same dews that fell
On the May-grown Asphodel.
Spright of Fire — away ! away !

BREAMA

Spright of Fire — away ! away ! 30
Zephyr, blue-eyed Faery, turn,
And see my cool sedge-shaded urn,
Where it rests its mossy brim
'Mid water-mint and cresses dim;
And the flowers, in sweet troubles,
Lift their eyes above the bubbles,
Like our Queen, when she would please
To sleep, and Oberon will tease.
Love me, blue-eyed Faery ! true,
Soothly I am sick for you. 40

ZEPHYR

Gentle Breama ! by the first
Violet young nature nurst,
I will bathe myself with thee,
So you sometime follow me
To my home, far, far, in west,
Far beyond the search and quest
Of the golden-browed sun.
Come with me, o'er tops of trees,
To my fragrant palaces,
Where they ever floating are 50
Beneath the cherish of a star
Call'd Vesper, who with silver veil
Ever hides his brilliance pale,
Ever gently-drowsed doth keep
Twilight for the Fays to sleep.
Fear not that your watery hair
Will thirst in drouthy ringlets there;
Clouds of stored summer rains
Thou shalt taste, before the stains
Of the mountain soil they take, 60
And too unlucent for thee make.
I love thee, crystal Faery, true !
Sooth I am as sick for you !

SALAMANDER

Out, ye aguish Faeries, out !
Chilly lovers, what a rout
Keep ye with your frozen breath,
Colder than the mortal death.
Adder-eyed Dusketha, speak,
Shall we leave them, and go seek
In the earth's wide entrails old
Couches warm as theirs is cold ? 70
O for a fiery gloom and thee,

Dusketha, so enchantingly
Freckle-wing'd and lizard-sided !

DUSKETHA

By thee, Spright, will I be guided !
I care not for cold or heat;
Frost and flame, or sparks, or sleet,
To my essence are the same;—
But I honour more the flame.
Spright of fire, I follow thee
Wheresoever it may be;
To the torrid spouts and fountains,
Underneath earth-quaked mountains;
Or, at thy supreme desire,
Touch the very pulse of fire
With my bare unlidged eyes.

80

SALAMANDER

Sweet Dusketha ! paradise !
Off, ye icy Spirits, fly !
Frosty creatures of the sky !

DUSKETHA

Breathe upon them, fiery Spright !

90

ZEPHYR, BREAMA (*to each other*)

Away ! away to our delight !

SALAMANDER

Go, feed on icicles, while we
Bedded in tongued flames will be.

DUSKETHA

Lead me to these fev'rous glooms,
Spright of Fire !

BREAMA

Me to the blooms,
Blue eyed Zephyr of those flowers
Far in the west where the May-cloud lowers:
And the beams of still Vesper, where
winds are all whist,
Are shed thro' the rain and the milder
mist,
And twilight your floating bowers.

100

FAERY SONGS

These two songs are given in *Life, Letters
and Literary Remains*, but without date. It

seems not inapt to place them near the *Song of
Four Fairies*.

I

SHED no tear ! O shed no tear !
The flower will bloom another year.
Weep no more ! O weep no more !
Young buds sleep in the root's white core.
Dry your eyes ! O dry your eyes,
For I was taught in Paradise
To ease my breast of melodies —
Shed no tear.

Overhead ! look overhead
'Mong the blossoms white and red —
Look up, look up — I flutter now
On this flush pomegranate bough.
See me ! 't is this silvery bill
Ever cures the good man's ill.
Shed no tear ! O shed no tear !
The flower will bloom another year.
Adieu, Adieu — I fly, adieu,
I vanish in the heaven's blue —
Adieu, Adieu !

II

Ah ! woe is me ! poor silver-wing !
That I must chant thy lady's dirge,
And death to this fair haunt of spring,
Of melody, and streams of flowery
verge, —
Poor silver-wing ! ah ! woe is me !
That I must see
These blossoms snow upon thy lady's pall !
Go, pretty page ! and in her ear
Whisper that the hour is near !
Softly tell her not to fear
Such calm favonian burial !
Go, pretty page ! and soothly tell, —
The blossoms hang by a melting spell,
And fall they must, ere a star wink thrice
Upon her closed eyes,
That now in vain are weeping their last
tears,
At sweet life leaving, and those arbours
green, —
Rich dowry from the Spirit of the
Spheres, —
Alas ! poor Queen !

ON FAME

'You cannot eat your cake and have it too.' — *Proverb.*

Sent with the next two to George and Georgiana Keats, April 30, 1819, and printed in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*.

How fever'd is that man, who cannot look
Upon his mortal days with temperate
blood,
Who vexes all the leaves of his life's book,
And robs his fair name of its maiden-
hood:
It is as if the rose should pluck herself,
Or the ripe plum finger its misty bloom;
As if a Naiad, like a meddling elf,
Should darken her pure grot with muddy
gloom.
But the rose leaves herself upon the brier,
For winds to kiss and grateful bees to
feed,
And the ripe plum still wears its dim at-
tire,
The undisturbed lake has crystal space:
Why then should man, teasing the
world for grace,
Spoil his salvation for a fierce miscreed ?

ANOTHER ON FAME

FAME, like a wayward girl, will still be coy
To those who woo her with too slavish
knees,
But makes surrender to some thoughtless
boy,
And dotes the more upon a heart at ease;
She is a Gipsy, — will not speak to those
Who have not learnt to be content with-
out her;
A Jilt, whose ear was never whisper'd
close,
Who thinks they scandal her who talk
about her;
A very Gipsy is she, Nilus-born,
Sister-in-law to jealous Potiphar;
Ye lovesick Bards ! repay her scorn for
scorn;

Ye Artists lovelorn ! madmen that ye
are !

Make your best bow to her and bid adieu,
Then, if she likes it, she will follow you.

TO SLEEP

O soft embalmer of the still midnight,
Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,
Our gloom-pleased eyes, embower'd from
the light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine:
O soothest Sleep ! if so it please thee,
close,
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing
eyes,
Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its dewy charities;
Then save me, or the passed day will
shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes;
Save me from curious conscience, that
still lords
Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a
mole;
Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,
And seal the hushed casket of my soul.

ODE TO PSYCHE

'The following poem — the last I have writ-
ten — is the first and only one with which I have
taken even moderate pains. I have, for the
most part, dashed off my lines in a hurry. This
I have done leisurely — I think it reads the more
richly for it, and will I hope encourage me to
write other things in even a more peaceable
and healthy spirit. You must recollect that
Psyche was not embodied as a goddess before
the time of Apuleius the Platonist, who lived
after the Augustan age, and consequently the
Goddess was never worshipped or sacrificed to
with any of the ancient fervour — and perhaps
never thought of in the old religion — I am
more orthodox than to let a heathen Goddess
be so neglected.' Keats to his Brother and
Sister, April 30, 1819. He afterward included
the poem in his volume, *Lamia, Isabella, The
Eve of St. Agnes and other Poems*, 1820.

I

O GODDESS! hear these tuneless numbers,
 wrung

By sweet enforcement and remembrance
 dear,

And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
 Even into thine own soft-conched ear:

Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
 The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?
 I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
 And, on the sudden, fainting with sur-
 prise,

Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
 In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring
 roof 10

Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where
 there ran

A brooklet, scarce espied:

II

'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers fragrant-
 eyed,

Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
 They lay calm-breathing on the bedded
 grass;

Their arms embraced, and their pinions
 too;

Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade
 adieu,

As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
 And ready still past kisses to outnumber

At tender eye-dawn of aurean love: 20
 The winged boy I knew;

But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove?
 His Psyche true!

III

O latest-born and loveliest vision far

Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!

Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,
 Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the
 sky;

Fairer than these, though temple thou hast
 none,

Nor altar heap'd with flowers;

Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan

Upon the midnight hours; 31

No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
 From chain-swung censer teeming;
 No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

IV

O brightest! though too late for antique
 vows,

Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs,
 Holy the air, the water, and the fire;

Yet even in these days so far retired 40
 From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
 Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
 I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspired.

So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
 Upon the midnight hours;

Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense
 sweet

From swung censer teeming;
 Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

V

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane
 In some untrodden region of my mind,
 Where branched thoughts, new-grown with
 pleasant pain, 52

Instead of pines shall murmur in the
 wind:

Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd
 trees

Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep
 by steep;

And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds,
 and bees,

The moss-lain Dryads shall be lulled to
 sleep;

And in the midst of this wide quietness

A rosy sanctuary will I dress

With the wreath'd trellis of a working
 brain, 60

With buds, and bells, and stars without
 a name,

With all the gardener Fancy e'er could
 feign,

Who breeding flowers, will never breed
 the same:

And there shall be for thee all soft delight
 That shadowy thought can win,
 A bright torch, and a casement ope at
 night,
 To let the warm Love in !

SONNET

In copying his 'Ode to Psyche,' Keats added the flourish 'Here endethe ye Ode to Psyche,' and went on 'Incipit altera soneta.' 'I have been endeavouring,' he writes, 'to discover a better Sonnet Stanza than we have. The legitimate does not suit the language over well from the pouncing rhymes — the other kind appears too elegiac — and the couplet at the end of it has seldom a pleasing effect — I do not pretend to have succeeded — it will explain itself.' The sonnet was printed in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*.

IF by dull rhymes our English must be
 chain'd,

And, like Andromeda, the Sonnet sweet
 Fetter'd, in spite of pained loveliness;

Let us find out, if we must be constrain'd,

Sandals more interwoven and complete
 To fit the naked foot of poesy;

Let us inspect the lyre, and weigh the
 stress

Of every chord, and see what may be
 gain'd

By ear industrious, and attention meet;

Misers of sound and syllable, no less

Than Midas of his coinage, let us be

Jealous of dead leaves in the bay-wreath
 crown:

So, if we may not let the Muse be free,

She will be bound with garlands of her
 own.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

First published in the July, 1819, *Annals of the Fine Arts* and included in the 1820 volume. It was composed in May, 1819. In the Aldine edition of 1876 Lord Houghton prefixes this note: 'In the spring of 1819 a nightingale built her nest next Mr. Bevan's house. Keats

took great pleasure in her song, and one morning took his chair from the breakfast table to the grass plot under a plum tree, where he remained between two and three hours. He then reached the house with some scraps of paper in his hand, which he soon put together in the form of this Ode.' Haydon in a letter to Miss Mitford says: 'The death of his brother [in December, 1818] wounded him deeply, and it appeared to me from that hour he began to droop. He wrote his exquisite 'Ode to the Nightingale' at this time, and as we were one evening walking in the Kilburn meadows he repeated it to me, before he put it to paper, in a low, tremulous undertone which affected me extremely.' It may well be that Tom Keats was in the poet's mind when he wrote line 26.

I

MY heart aches, and a drowsy numbness
 pains

My sense, as though of hemlock I had
 drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had
 sunk:

'T is not through envy of thy happy lot,

But being too happy in thine happiness, —

That thou, light-winged Dryad of the
 trees,

In some melodious plot

Of beechen green, and shadows number-
 less,

Singest of summer in full-throated
 ease.

10

II

O for a draught of vintage ! that hath been
 Cool'd a long age in the deep-delled
 earth,

Tasting of Flora and the country-green,

Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-
 burnt mirth !

O for a beaker full of the warm South,

Full of the true, the blushful Hippo-
 crene,

With beaded bubbles winking at the
 brim,

And purple-stained mouth ;

That I might drink, and leave the world
unseen,
And with thee fade away into the for-
est dim: 20

III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never
known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other
groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray
hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-
thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of
sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous
eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-
morrow. 30

IV

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and re-
tards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her
throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry
Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes
blown
Through verdurous glooms and wind-
ing mossy ways. 40

V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the
boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each
sweet

Wherewith the seasonable month en-
dows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree
wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglan-
tine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in
leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy
wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on sum-
mer eves. 50

VI

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful
Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused
rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no
pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul
abroad

In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears
in vain —
To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal
Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was
heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a
path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when,
sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on
the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands for-
lorn. 70

VIII

Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell

To toll me back from thee to my sole self !

Adieu ! the fancy cannot cheat so well

As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.

Adieu ! adieu ! thy plaintive anthem fades

Past the near meadows, over the still stream,

Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep

In the next valley-glades:

Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?

Fled is that music:—do I wake or sleep ?

80

LAMIA

In the early summer of 1819 Keats felt the pressure of want of money and determined to go into the country, where he could live cheaply, and devote himself to writing. He went accordingly to Shanklin, Isle of Wight, and wrote thence to Reynolds, July 12, 'I have finished the Act [the first of *Otho the Great*], and in the interval of beginning the 2nd have proceeded pretty well with *Lamia*, finishing the first part which consists of about 400 lines. I have great hope of success [in this enterprise of maintenance], because I make use of my judgment more deliberately than I have yet done.' He continued to work at *Lamia* in connection with the tragedy, completing it in August at Winchester. It formed the leading poem in the volume *Lamia, Isabella, the Eve of St. Agnes and other Poems*, published in 1820. Keats's own judgment of it is in his words: 'I am certain there is that sort of fire in it which must take hold of people in some way—give them either pleasant or unpleasant association.' He found the germ of the story in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, where it is credited to Philostratus. The passage will be found in the Notes. Lord Houghton says, on the authority of Brown, that Keats wrote the poem after much study of Dryden's versification.

PART I

UPON a time, before the faery broods

Drove Nymph and Satyr from the prosperous woods,

Before King Oberon's bright diadem,
Sceptre, and mantle, clasp'd with dewy gem,
Frighted away the Dryads and the Fauns
From rushes green, and brakes, and cow-slipp'd lawns,

The ever-smitten Hermes empty left
His golden throne, bent warm on amorous theft;

From high Olympus had he stolen light,
On this side of Jove's clouds, to escape the sight

10

Of his great summoner, and made retreat
Into a forest on the shores of Crete.

For somewhere in that sacred island dwelt
A nymph, to whom all hoofed Satyrs knelt;
At whose white feet the languid Tritons
poured

Pearls, while on land they wither'd and adored.

Fast by the springs where she to bathe was wont,

And in those meads where sometimes she might haunt,

Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,

Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose.

20

Ah, what a world of love was at her feet !
So Hermes thought, and a celestial heat
Burnt from his winged heels to either ear,
That from a whiteness, as the lily clear,
Blush'd into roses 'mid his golden hair,
Fallen in jealous curls about his shoulders bare.

From vale to vale, from wood to wood,
he flew,

Breathing upon the flowers his passion new,
And wound with many a river to its head,
To find where this sweet nymph prepared
her secret bed:

30

In vain; the sweet nymph might nowhere be found,

And so he rested, on the lonely ground,
Pensive, and full of painful jealousies
Of the Wood-Gods, and even the very trees.
There as he stood, he heard a mournful voice,

Such as once heard, in gentle heart, de-
stroy

All pain but pity: thus the lone voice spake:
'When from this wreathed tomb shall I
awake!

When move in a sweet body fit for life,
And love, and pleasure, and the ruddy
strife ⁴⁰

Of hearts and lips! Ah, miserable me!' ⁴⁰
The God, dove-footed, glided silently
Round bush and tree, soft-brushing, in his
speed,

The taller grasses and full-flowering weed,
Until he found a palpitating snake,
Bright, and cirque-couchant in a dusky
brake.

She was a gordian shape of dazzling hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and
blue;

Striped like a zebra, freckled like a pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson barr'd;
And full of silver moons, that, as she
breathed, ⁵¹

Dissolved, or brighter shone, or inter-
wreathed

Their lustres with the gloomier tapes-
tries —

So rainbow-sided, touch'd with miseries,
She seem'd, at once, some penanced lady
elf,

Some demon's mistress, or the demon's
self.

Upon her crest she wore a wannish fire
Sprinkled with stars, like Ariadne's tiar:
Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet!
She had a woman's mouth with all its
pearls complete: ⁶⁰

And for her eyes — what could such eyes
do there

But weep, and weep, that they were born
so fair?

As Proserpine still weeps for her Sicilian
air.

Her throat was serpent, but the words she
spake

Came, as through bubbling honey, for
Love's sake,

And thus; while Hermes on his pinions lay,
Like a stoop'd falcon ere he takes his prey:

'Fair Hermes! crown'd with feathers,
fluttering light,

I had a splendid dream of thee last night:
I saw thee sitting, on a throne of gold, ⁷⁰
Among the Gods, upon Olympus old,
The only sad one; for thou didst not hear
The soft, lute-finger'd Muses chanting
clear,

Nor even Apollo when he sang alone,
Deaf to his throbbing throat's long, long
melodious moan.

I dreamt I saw thee, robed in purple flakes,
Break amorous through the clouds, as
morning breaks,

And, swiftly as a bright Phœbean dart,
Strike for the Cretan isle; and here thou
art!

Too gentle Hermes, hast thou found the
maid?' ⁸⁰

Whereat the star of Lethe not delay'd
His rosy eloquence, and thus inquired:
'Thou smooth-lipp'd serpent, surely high-
inspired!

Thou beauteous wreath, with melancholy
eyes,

Possess whatever bliss thou canst devise,
Telling me only where my nymph is fled, —
Where she doth breathe!' 'Bright planet,
thou hast said,'

Return'd the snake, 'but seal with oaths,
fair God!'

'I swear,' said Hermes, 'by my serpent rod,
And by thine eyes, and by thy starry
crown!' ⁹⁰

Light flew his earnest words, among the
blossoms blown.

Then thus again the brilliance feminine:
'Too frail of heart! for this lost nymph of
thine,

Free as the air, invisibly, she strays
About these thornless wilds; her pleasant
days

She tastes unseen; unseen her nimble
feet

Leave traces in the grass and flowers sweet;

From weary tendrils, and bow'd branches
green,
She plucks the fruit unseen, she bathes un-
seen:

And by my power is her beauty veil'd 100
To keep it unaffronted, unassail'd
By the love-glances of unlovely eyes,
Of Satyrs, Fauns, and blear'd Silenus' sighs.
Pale grew her immortality, for woe
Of all these lovers, and she grieved so
I took compassion on her, bade her steep
Her hair in weird syrops, that would keep
Her loveliness invisible, yet free
To wander as she loves, in liberty.
Thou shalt behold her, Hermes, thou alone,
If thou wilt, as thou swearest, grant my
boon !' 111

Then, once again, the charmed God began
An oath, and through the serpent's ears it
ran

Warm, tremulous, devout, psalterian.
Ravish'd she lifted her Circean head,
Blush'd a live damask, and swift-lisping
said,

'I was a woman, let me have once more
A woman's shape, and charming as before.
I love a youth of Corinth — O the bliss !
Give me my woman's form, and place me
where he is. 120

Stoop, Hermes, let me breathe upon thy
brow,

And thou shalt see thy sweet nymph even
now.'

The God on half-shut feathers sank serene,
She breathed upon his eyes, and swift was
seen

Of both the guarded nymph near-smiling
on the green.

It was no dream; or say a dream it was,
Real are the dreams of Gods, and smoothly
pass

Their pleasures in a long immortal dream.
One warm, flush'd moment, hovering, it
might seem

Dash'd by the wood-nymph's beauty, so he
burn'd; 130

Then, lighting on the printless verdure,
turn'd

To the swoon'd serpent, and with languid
arm,

Delicate, put to proof the lithe Caducean
charm.

So done, upon the nymph his eyes he bent
Full of adoring tears and blandishment,
And towards her stept: she, like a moon in
wane,

Faded before him, cower'd, nor could re-
strain

Her fearful sobs, self-folding like a flower
That faints into itself at evening hour:
But the God fostering her chilled hand, 140
She felt the warmth, her eyelids open'd
bland,

And, like new flowers at morning song of
bees,

Bloom'd, and gave up her honey to the
lees.

Into the green-recessed woods they flew;
Nor grew they pale, as mortal lovers do.

Left to herself, the serpent now began
To change; her elfin blood in madness ran,
Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, there-
with besprent,

Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent;
Her eyes in torture fix'd, and anguish
drear, 150

Hot, glazed, and wide, with lid-lashes all
sear,

Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without
one cooling tear.

The colours all inflamed throughout her
train,

She writhed about, convulsed with scarlet
pain:

A deep volcanian yellow took the place
Of all her milder-mooned body's grace;
And, as the lava ravishes the mead,
Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede:
Made gloom of all her frecklings, streaks
and bars,

Eclipsed her crescents, and lick'd up her
stars: 160

So that, in moments few, she was undrest
Of all her sapphires, greens, and amethyst,
And rubious-argent: of all these bereft,

Nothing but pain and ugliness were left.
Still shone her crown; that vanish'd, also
she

Melted and disappear'd as suddenly;
And in the air, her new voice luting soft,
Cried, 'Lycius! gentle Lycius!' — Borne
aloft

With the bright mists about the mountains
hoar

These words dissolved: Crete's forests
heard no more. 170

Whither fled Lamia, now a lady bright,
A full-born beauty new and exquisite?
She fled into that valley they pass o'er
Who go to Corinth from Cenchreas' shore:
And rested at the foot of those wild hills,
The rugged founts of the Peræan rills,
And of that other ridge whose barren back
Stretches, with all its mist and cloudy
rack,

South-westward to Cleone. There she
stood 179

About a young bird's flutter from a wood,
Fair, on a sloping green of mossy tread,
By a clear pool, wherein she passion'd
To see herself escaped from so sore ills,
While her robes flaunted with the daffo-
dils.

Ah, happy Lycius! — for she was a maid
More beautiful than ever twisted braid,
Or sigh'd, or blush'd, or on spring-flowered
lea

Spread a green kirtle to the minstrelsy:
A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore
Of love deep learned to the red heart's
core: 190

Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain
To unperplex bliss from its neighbour
pain;

Define their pettish limits, and estrange
Their points of contact, and swift counter-
change;

Intrigue with the specious chaos, and dis-
part

Its most ambiguous atoms with sure art;
As though in Cupid's college she had spent

Sweet days a lovely graduate, still unshent.
And kept his rosy terms in idle languish-
ment.

Why this fair creature chose so fairly
By the wayside to linger, we shall see; 201
But first 't is fit to tell how she could muse
And dream, when in the serpent prison-
house,

Of all she list, strange or magnificent:
How, ever, where she will'd, her spirit
went;

Whether to faint Elysium, or where
Down through tress-lifting waves the Ne-
reids fair

Wind into Thetis' bower by many a pearly
stair;

Or where God Bacchus drains his cups
divine,

Stretch'd out, at ease, beneath a glutinous
pine; 210

Or where in Pluto's gardens palatine
Mulciber's columns gleam in far piazzian
line.

And sometimes into cities she would send
Her dream, with feast and rioting to blend;
And once, while among mortals dreaming
thus,

She saw the young Corinthian Lycius
Charioting foremost in the envious race,
Like a young Jove with calm uneager
face,

And fell into a swooning love of him. 219
Now on the moth-time of that evening dim
He would return that way, as well she
knew,

To Corinth from the shore; for freshly
blew

The eastern soft wind, and his galley now
Grated the quay-stones with her brazen
prow

In port Cenchreas, from Egina isle
Fresh anchor'd; whither he had been awhile
To sacrifice to Jove, whose temple there
Waits with high marble doors for blood
and incense rare.

Jove heard his vows, and better'd his de-
sire:

For by some freakful chance he made re-
 tire 230
 From his companions, and set forth to
 walk,
 Perhaps grown wearied of their Corinth
 talk:
 Over the solitary hills he fared,
 Thoughtless at first, but ere eve's star ap-
 pear'd
 His phantasy was lost, where reason fades,
 In the calm'd twilight of Platonic shades.
 Lamia beheld him coming, near, more
 near —
 Close to her passing, in indifference drear,
 His silent sandals swept the mossy green;
 So neighbour'd to him, and yet so unseen 240
 She stood: he pass'd, shut up in mysteries,
 His mind wrapp'd like his mantle, while
 her eyes
 Follow'd his steps, and her neck regal
 white
 Turn'd — syllabing thus, 'Ah, Lycius
 bright!
 And will you leave me on the hills alone?
 Lycius, look back! and be some pity shown.'
 He did; not with cold wonder fearingly,
 But Orpheus-like at an Eurydice;
 For so delicious were the words she sung,
 It seem'd he had loved them a whole sum-
 mer long: 250
 And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty
 up,
 Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
 And still the cup was full, — while he,
 afraid
 Lest she should vanish ere his lips had paid
 Due adoration, thus began to adore;
 Her soft look growing coy, she saw his
 chain so sure:
 'Leave thee alone! Look back! Ah, God-
 dess, see
 Whether my eyes can ever turn from thee!
 For pity do not this sad heart belie —
 Even as thou vanishest so I shall die. 260
 Stay! though a Naiad of the rivers, stay!
 To thy far wishes will thy streams obey:
 Stay! though the greenest woods be thy
 domain,

Alone they can drink up the morning rain:
 Though a descended Pleiad, will not one
 Of thine harmonious sisters keep in tune
 Thy spheres, and as thy silver proxy shine?
 So sweetly to these ravish'd ears of mine
 Came thy sweet greeting, that if thou
 shouldst fade,
 Thy memory will waste me to a shade: —
 For pity do not melt! — 'If I should
 stay,' 271
 Said Lamia, 'here, upon this floor of clay,
 And pain my steps upon these flowers too
 rough,
 What canst thou say or do of charm enough
 To dull the nice remembrance of my home?
 Thou canst not ask me with thee here to
 roam
 Over these hills and vales, where no joy
 is, —
 Empty of immortality and bliss!
 Thou art a scholar, Lycius, and must know
 That finer spirits cannot breathe below 280
 In human climes, and live: Alas! poor
 youth,
 What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe
 My essence? What serener palaces,
 Where I may all my many senses please,
 And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts
 appease?
 It cannot be — Adieu!' So said, she rose
 Tiptoe with white arms spread. He, sick
 to lose
 The amorous promise of her lone complain,
 Swoon'd murmuring of love, and pale with
 pain.
 The cruel lady, without any show 290
 Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,
 But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
 With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
 Put her new lips to his, and gave afresh
 The life she had so tangled in her mesh:
 And as he from one trance was wakening
 Into another, she began to sing,
 Happy in beauty, life, and love, and every
 thing,
 A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres,
 While, like held breath, the stars drew in
 their panting fires. 300

And then she whisper'd in such trembling
tone,
As those who, safe together met alone
For the first time through many anguish'd
days,
Use other speech than looks; bidding him
raise
His drooping head, and clear his soul of
doubt,
For that she was a woman, and without
Any more subtle fluid in her veins
Than throbbing blood, and that the self-
same pains
Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.
And next she wonder'd how his eyes could
miss 310
Her face so long in Corinth, where, she
said,
She dwelt but half retired, and there had
led
Days happy as the gold coin could invent
Without the aid of love; yet in content
Till she saw him, as once she pass'd him by,
Where 'gainst a column he leant thought-
fully
At Venus' temple porch, 'mid baskets
heap'd
Of amorous herbs and flowers, newly reap'd
Late on that eve, as 't was the night before
The Adonian feast; whereof she saw no
more, 320
But wept alone those days, for why should
she adore?
Lycius from death awoke into amaze,
To see her still, and singing so sweet lays;
Then from amaze into delight he fell
To hear her whisper woman's lore so well;
And every word she spake enticed him on
To unperplex'd delight and pleasure known.
Let the mad poets say whate'er they please
Of the sweets of Fairies, Peris, Goddesses,
There is not such a treat among them
all, 330
Haunters of cavern, lake, and waterfall,
As a real woman, lineal indeed
From Pyrrha's pebbles or old Adam's seed.
Thus gentle Lamia judged, and judged
aright,

That Lycius could not love in half a fright,
So threw the goddess off, and won his heart
More pleasantly by playing woman's part,
With no more awe than what her beauty
gave,
That, while it smote, still guaranteed to
save.
Lycius to all made eloquent reply, 340
Marrying to every word a twin-born sigh:
And last, pointing to Corinth, ask'd her
sweet,
If 't was too far that night for her soft
feet.
The way was short, for Lamia's eagerness
Made, by a spell, the triple league decrease
To a few paces; not at all surmised
By blinded Lycius, so in her comprised:
They pass'd the city gates, he knew not how,
So noiseless, and he never thought to know.

As men talk in a dream, so Corinth all, 350
Throughout her palaces imperial,
And all her populous streets and temples
lewd,
Mutter'd, like tempest in the distance
brew'd,
To the wide-spreaded night above her
towers.
Men, women, rich and poor, in the cool
hours,
Shuffled their sandals o'er the pavement
white,
Companion'd or alone; while many a light
Flared, here and there, from wealthy festi-
vals,
And threw their moving shadows on the
walls,
Or found them cluster'd in the corniced
shade 360
Of some arch'd temple door, or dusky
colonnade.

Muffling his face, of greeting friends in
fear,
Her fingers he press'd hard, as one came
near
With curl'd gray beard, sharp eyes, and
smooth bald crown,

Slow-stepp'd, and robed in philosophic
gown:
Lycius shrank closer, as they met and
past,
Into his mantle, adding wings to haste,
While hurried Lamia trembled: 'Ah,' said
he,
'Why do you shudder, love, so ruefully?
Why does your tender palm dissolve in
dew?'—
'I'm wearied,' said fair Lamia: 'tell me
who
Is that old man? I cannot bring to mind
His features:—Lycius! wherefore did you
blind
Yourself from his quick eyes?' Lycius
replied,
'Tis Apollonius sage, my trusty guide
And good instructor; but to-night he seems
The ghost of folly haunting my sweet
dreams.'

While yet he spake they had arrived
before
A pillar'd porch, with lofty portal door,
Where hung a silver lamp, whose phosphor
glow
Reflected in the slabbed steps below,
Mild as a star in water; for so new
And so unsullied was the marble hue,
So through the crystal polish, liquid fine,
Ran the dark veins, that none but feet
divine
Could e'er have touch'd there. Sounds
Æolian
Breathed from the hinges, as the ample
span
Of the wide doors disclosed a place un-
known
Some time to any, but those two alone,
And a few Persian mutes, who that same
year
Were seen about the markets: none knew
where
They could inhabit; the most curious
Were foil'd, who watch'd to trace them to
their house:
And but the flitter-winged verse must tell,

For truth's sake, what woe afterwards
befell,
'T would humour many a heart to leave
them thus,
Shut from the busy world of more incred-
ulous.

PART II

Love in a hut, with water and a crust,
Is—Love, forgive us!—cinders, ashes,
dust;
Love in a palace is perhaps at last
More grievous torment than a hermit's
fast:—
That is a doubtful tale from faery land,
Hard for the non-elect to understand.
Had Lycius lived to hand his story down,
He might have given the moral a fresh
frown,
Or clench'd it quite: but too short was
their bliss
To breed distrust and hate, that make the
soft voice hiss.
Besides, there, nightly, with terrific glare,
Love, jealous grown of so complete a pair,
Hover'd and buzz'd his wings, with fearful
roar,
Above the lintel of their chamber door,
And down the passage cast a glow upon
the floor.

For all this came a ruin: side by side
They were enthroned, in the even tide,
Upon a couch, near to a curtaining
Whose airy texture, from a golden string,
Floated into the room, and let appear
Unveil'd the summer heaven, blue and
clear,
Betwixt two marble shafts:—there they
reposed,
Where use had made it sweet, with eyelids
closed,
Saving a tithe which love still open kept,
That they might see each other while they
almost slept;
When from the slope side of a suburb
hill,

Deafening the swallow's twitter, came a thrill

Of trumpets — Lycius started — the sounds fled,

But left a thought, a buzzing in his head.

For the first time, since first he harbour'd in 30

That purple-lined palace of sweet sin,
His spirit pass'd beyond its golden bourn
Into the noisy world almost forsworn.

The lady, ever watchful, penetrant,
Saw this with pain, so arguing a want
Of something more, more than her empery
Of joys; and she began to moan and sigh
Because he mused beyond her, knowing well
That but a moment's thought is passion's
passing bell.

'Why do you sigh, fair creature?' whisper'd he: 40

'Why do you think?' return'd she tenderly:

'You have deserted me; — where am I now?

Not in your heart while care weighs on your brow:

No, no, you have dismiss'd me; and I go
From your breast houseless: aye, it must be so.'

He answer'd, bending to her open eyes,
Where he was mirror'd small in paradise,
'My silver planet, both of eve and morn!
Why will you plead yourself so sad forlorn,
While I am striving how to fill my heart 50
With deeper crimson, and a double smart?
How to entangle, trammel up and snare
Your soul in mine, and labyrinth you there,

Like the hid scent in an unbudded rose?
Aye, a sweet kiss — you see your mighty woes.

My thoughts! shall I unveil them? Listen then!

What mortal hath a prize, that other men
May be confounded and abash'd withal,
But lets it sometimes pace abroad majestic,

And triumph, as in thee I should rejoice 60
Amid the hoarse alarm of Corinth's voice.

Let my foes choke, and my friends shout afar,

While through the thronged streets your bridal car

Wheels round its dazzling spokes.' — The lady's cheek

Trembled; she nothing said, but, pale and meek,

Arose and knelt before him, wept a rain
Of sorrows at his words; at last with pain

Beseeching him, the while his hand she wrung,

To change his purpose. He thereat was stung,

Perverse, with stronger fancy to reclaim 70

Her wild and timid nature to his aim;

Besides, for all his love, in self despite,

Against his better self, he took delight

Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new.

His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue

Fierce and sanguineous as 't was possible

In one whose brow had no dark veins to swell.

Fine was the mitigated fury, like

Apollo's presence when in act to strike

The serpent — Ha! the serpent! certes, she 80

Was none. She burnt, she loved the tyranny,

And, all subdued, consented to the hour

When to the bridal he should lead his par-
amour.

Whispering in midnight silence, said the youth,

'Sure some sweet name thou hast, though, by my truth,

I have not ask'd it, ever thinking thee

Not mortal, but of heavenly progeny,

As still I do. Hast any mortal name,

Fit appellation for this dazzling frame?

Or friends or kinsfolk on the citied earth,

To share our marriage feast and nuptial mirth?' 90

'I have no friends,' said Lamia, 'no, not one;

My presence in wide Corinth hardly known:

My parents' bones are in their dusty urns

Sepulchred, where no kindled incense
burns,
Seeing all their luckless race are dead,
save me,
And I neglect the holy rite for thee.
Even as you list invite your many guests;
But if, as now it seems, your vision rests
With any pleasure on me, do not bid ¹⁰⁰
Old Apollonius — from him keep me hid.
Lycius, perplex'd at words so blind and
blank,
Made close inquiry; from whose touch she
shrank,
Feigning a sleep; and he to the dull shade
Of deep sleep in a moment was betray'd.

It was the custom then to bring away
The bride from home at blushing shut of
day,
Veil'd, in a chariot, heralded along
By strewn flowers, torches, and a marriage
song,
With other pageants: but this fair un-
known ¹¹⁰
Had not a friend. So being left alone,
(Lycius was gone to summon all his kin,
And knowing surely she could never win
His foolish heart from its mad pompous-
ness,
She set herself, high-thoughted, how to
dress
The misery in fit magnificence.
She did so, but 't is doubtful how and
whence
Came, and who were her subtle servitors.
About the halls, and to and from the doors,
There was a noise of wings, till in short
space ¹²⁰
The glowing banquet-room shone with
wide-arched grace.
A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone
Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm
might fade.
Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade
Of palm and plantain, met from either side,
High in the midst, in honour of the bride:
Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,

From either side their stems branch'd one
to one
All down the aisled place; and beneath all
There ran a stream of lamps straight on
from wall to wall. ¹³¹
So canopied, lay an untasted feast
Teeming with odours. Lamia, regal drest,
Silently paced about, and as she went,
In pale contented sort of discontent,
Mission'd her viewless servants to enrich
The fretted splendour of each nook and
niche.
Between the tree-stems, marbled plain at
first,
Came jasper panels; then, anon, there burst
Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees, ¹⁴⁰
And with the larger wove in small intrica-
cies.
Approving all, she faded at self-will,
And shut the chamber up, close, hush'd
and still,
Complete and ready for the revels rude,
When dreadful guests would come to spoil
her solitude.

The day appear'd, and all the gossip
rout.
O senseless Lycius! Madman! wherefore
flout
The silent-blessing fate, warm cloister'd
hours,
And show to common eyes these secret
bowers?
The herd approach'd; each guest, with busy
brain, ¹⁵⁰
Arriving at the portal, gazed amain,
And enter'd marvelling: for they knew the
street,
Remember'd it from childhood all complete
Without a gap, yet ne'er before had seen
That royal porch, that high-built fair de-
mesne;
So in they hurried all, mazed, curious and
keen:
Save one, who look'd thereon with eye se-
vere,
And with calm-planted steps walk'd in aus-
tere;

'T was Apollonius: something too he
laugh'd,
As though some knotty problem, that had
daft ¹⁶⁰
His patient thought, had now begun to
thaw,
And solve and melt:—'t was just as he
foresaw.

He met within the murmurous vestibule
His young disciple. ' 'T is no common rule,
Lycius,' said he, 'for uninvited guest
To force himself upon you, and infest
With an unbidden presence the bright
throng
Of younger friends; yet must I do this
wrong,
And you forgive me.' Lycius blush'd, and
led
The old man through the inner doors broad-
spread; ¹⁷⁰
With reconciling words and courteous mien
Turning into sweet milk the sophist's
spleen.

Of wealthy lustre was the banquet-room,
Fill'd with pervading brilliance and per-
fume:

Before each lucid panel fuming stood
A censer fed with myrrh and spiced wood,
Each by a sacred tripod held aloft,
Whose slender feet wide-swerved upon the
soft

Wool-woofed carpets: fifty wreaths of
smoke

From fifty censers their light voyage took
To the high roof, still mimick'd as they
rose ¹⁸¹

Along the mirror'd walls by twin-clouds
odorous.

Twelve spher'd tables, by silk seats in-
spher'd,

High as the level of a man's breast rear'd
On libbard's paws, upheld the heavy gold
Of cups and goblets, and the store thrice told
Of Ceres' horn, and, in huge vessels, wine
Came from the gloomy tun with merry
shine.

Thus loaded with a feast the tables stood,
Each shrining in the midst the image of a
God. ¹⁹⁰

When in an antechamber every guest
Had felt the cold full sponge to pleasure
press'd,
By ministering slaves, upon his hands and
feet,
And fragrant oils with ceremony meet
Pour'd on his hair, they all moved to the
feast
In white robes, and themselves in order
placed
Around the silken couches, wondering
Whence all this mighty cost and blaze of
wealth could spring.

Soft went the music the soft air along,
While fluent Greek a vowel'd under-song
Kept up among the guests, discoursing
low ²⁰¹

At first, for scarcely was the wine at flow;
But when the happy vintage touch'd their
brains,

Louder they talk, and louder come the
strains

Of powerful instruments:—the gorgeous
dyes,

The space, the splendour of the draperies,
The roof of awful richness, nectarous cheer,
Beautiful slaves, and Lamia's self, appear,
Now, when the wine has done its rosy
deed,

And every soul from human trammels
freed, ²¹⁰

No more so strange; for merry wine, sweet
wine,

Will make Elysian shades not too fair, too
divine.

Soon was God Bacchus at meridian height;
Flush'd were their cheeks, and bright eyes
double bright:

Garlands of every green, and every scent
From vales deflower'd, or forest-trees
branch-rent,

In baskets of bright osier'd gold were
brought

High as the handles heap'd, to suit the
thought

Of every guest: that each, as he did please,
Might fancy-fit his brows, silk-pillow'd at
his ease. 220

What wreath for Lamia? What for Lycius?

What for the sage, old Apollonius?
Upon her aching forehead be there hung
The leaves of willow and of adder's tongue;
And for the youth, quick, let us strip for
him

The thyrsus, that his watching eyes may
swim

Into forgetfulness; and, for the sage,
Let spear-grass and the spiteful thistle
wage

War on his temples. Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy? 230
There was an awful rainbow once in
heaven:

We know her woof, her texture; she is
given

In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine —
Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a
shade.

By her glad Lycius sitting, in chief place,
Scarce saw in all the room another face, 240
Till, checking his love trance, a cup he
took

Full brimm'd, and opposite sent forth a
look

'Cross the broad table, to beseech a glance
From his old teacher's wrinkled counte-
nance,

And pledge him. The bald-head philoso-
pher

Had fix'd his eye, without a twinkle or
stir,

Full on the alarmed beauty of the bride,
Brow-beating her fair form, and troubling
her sweet pride.

Lycius then press'd her hand, with devout
touch,

As pale it lay upon the rosy couch: 250
'T was icy, and the cold ran through his
veins;

Then sudden it grew hot, and all the pains
Of an unnatural heat shot to his heart.

'Lamia, what means this? Wherefore dost
thou start?

Know'st thou that man?' Poor Lamia an-
swer'd not.

He gazed into her eyes, and not a jot
Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal:
More, more he gazed: his human senses
reel:

Some hungry spell that loveliness absorbs:
There was no recognition in those orbs. 260
'Lamia!' he cried — and no soft-toned
reply.

The many heard, and the loud revelry
Grew hush: the stately music no more
breathes;

The myrtle sicken'd in a thousand wreaths
By faint degrees, voice, lute, and pleasure
ceased;

A deadly silence step by step increased,
Until it seem'd a horrid presence there,
And not a man but felt the terror in his
hair.

'Lamia!' he shriek'd; and nothing but
the shriek

With its sad echo did the silence break. 270
'Begone, foul dream!' he cried, gazing
again

In the bride's face, where now no azure
vein

Wander'd on fair-spaced temples; no soft
bloom

Misted the cheek; no passion to illumine
The deep-recessed vision: — all was blight;
Lamia, no longer fair, there sat a deadly
white.

'Shut, shut those juggling eyes, thou ruth-
less man!

Turn them aside, wretch! or the righteous
ban

Of all the Gods, whose dreadful images
Here represent their shadowy presences,

May pierce them on the sudden with the
 thorn 281
 Of painful blindness; leaving thee for-
 lorn,
 In trembling dotage to the feeblest fright
 Of conscience, for their long-offended
 might,
 For all thine impious proud-heart sophis-
 tries,
 Unlawful magic, and enticing lies.
 Corinthians! look upon that gray-beard
 wretch!
 Mark how, possess'd, his lashless eyelids
 stretch
 Around his demon eyes! Corinthians, see!
 My sweet bride withers at their potency.' 290
 'Fool!' said the sophist, in an under-tone
 Gruff with contempt; which a death-nigh-
 ing moan
 From Lycius answer'd, as heart-struck and
 lost,
 He sank supine beside the aching ghost.
 'Fool! Fool!' repeated he, while his eyes
 still

Relented not, nor moved; 'from every ill
 Of life have I preserved thee to this day,
 And shall I see thee made a serpent's
 prey?'
 Then Lamia breathed death breath; the
 sophist's eye,
 Like a sharp spear, went through her ut-
 terly, 300
 Keen, cruel, perçant, stinging: she, as
 well
 As her weak hand could any meaning tell,
 Motion'd him to be silent; vainly so,
 He look'd and look'd again a level — No!
 'A serpent!' echoed he; no sooner said,
 Than with a frightful scream she vanished:
 And Lycius' arms were empty of delight,
 As were his limbs of life, from that same
 night.
 On the high couch he lay! — his friends
 came round —
 Supported him — no pulse or breath they
 found, 310
 And, in its marriage robe, the heavy body
 wound.

DRAMAS

OTHO THE GREAT

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS

When Keats went to the Isle of Wight in the early summer of 1819, it was with the determination to make his literary powers yield him a support, and the theatre, which he knew well, offered the surest means, in his judgment, for an immediate return. There was, indeed, something of a literary revival of the drama at this time, and Keats had often discussed with his friends the merits of plays then before the public, and especially the character of Kean's acting. They were rather skeptical of Keats's ability to produce a successful play, and their doubts had some good basis, if we may judge from the account which Charles Armitage Brown gives of Keats's mode of composition. Lord Houghton quotes the following from a manuscript by Brown, who was Keats's companion at Shanklin: 'At Shanklin he undertook a difficult task: I engaged to furnish him with the title, characters and dramatic conduct of a tragedy, and he was to enwrap it in poetry. The progress of this work was curious, for while I sat opposite to him, he caught my description of each scene entire, with the characters to be brought forward, the events, and everything connected with it. Thus he went on, scene after scene, never knowing nor enquiring into the scene which was to follow, until four acts were completed. It was then he required to know at once all the events that were to occupy the fifth act; I explained them to him, but, after a patient hearing and some thought, he insisted that many incidents in it were too humorous, or, as he termed them, too melodramatic. He wrote the fifth act in accordance with his own views, and so contented was I with his poetry that at the time, and for a long time after, I thought he was in the right.'

Keats himself says little of the tragedy, except as a piece of work solely designed for pro-

fit. 'Brown and I,' he writes to John Taylor, his publisher, 'have together been engaged (this I should wish to remain secret) on a Tragedy which I have just finished and from which we hope to share moderate profits. . . . I feel every confidence that, if I choose, I may be a popular writer. That I will never be; but for all that I will get a livelihood.' He wrote shortly after to the same friend: 'Brown likes the tragedy very much. But he is not a fit judge of it, as I have only acted as midwife to his plot; and of course he will be fond of his child.' The money to be got from the tragedy was uppermost in his mind when he wrote to his brother George, who shared his pecuniary difficulties: 'We are certainly in a very low estate — I say we, for I am in such a situation, that were it not for the assistance of Brown and Taylor, I must be as badly off as a man can be. I could not raise any sum by the promise of any poem, no, not by the mortgage of my intellect. We must wait a little while. I really have hopes of success. I have finished a tragedy, which if it succeeds will enable me to sell what I may have in manuscript to a good advantage. I have passed my time in reading, writing, and fretting — the last I intend to give up, and stick to the other two. They are the only chances of benefit to us. . . . Take matters as coolly as you can; and confidently expecting help from England, act as if no help were nigh. Mine, I am sure, is a tolerable tragedy; it would have been a bank to me, if just as I had finished it, I had not heard of Kean's resolution to go to America. That was the worst news I could have had. There is no actor can do the principal character besides Kean. At Covent Garden there is a great chance of its being damn'd. Were it to succeed even there it would lift me out of the mire; I mean the mire of a bad reputation which is continually rising against me. My name with the literary fashionables is vulgar. I am a weaver-boy to them. A tragedy would

lift me out of this mess, and mess it is as far as regards our pockets.'

Keats continued to pin his faith on Kean. 'The report seems now,' he writes to the same, September 27, 'more in favour of Kean's stopping in England. If he should I have confident hopes of our tragedy. If he invokes the hot-blooded character of Ludolph, — and he is the only actor that can do it, — he will add to

his own fame and improve my fortune.' Keats waited with slowly ebbing hopes. Elliston read it, but wished to put it off till another season. 'Perhaps,' Keats writes in December, 'we may give it another furbish, and try it at Covent Garden. 'T would do one's heart good to see Macready in Ludolph.' But the play never was acted at either Drury Lane or Covent Garden.

OTHO THE GREAT

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

OTHO THE GREAT, *Emperor of Germany.*

LUDOLPH, *his Son.*

CONRAD, *Duke of Franconia.*

ALBERT, *a Knight, favoured by Otho.*

SIGIFRED, *an Officer, friend of Ludolph.*

THEODORE, } *Officers.*

GONFRED, }

ETHELBERT, *an Abbot.*

GERSA, *Prince of Hungary.*

An Hungarian Captain.

Physician.

Page.

Nobles, Knights, Attendants, and Soldiers.

ERMINIA, *Niece of Otho.*

AURANTHE, *Conrad's Sister.*

Ladies and Attendants.

SCENE. — *The Castle of Friedburg, its vicinity, and the Hungarian Camp.*

TIME. — *One Day.*

ACT I

SCENE I. — *An Apartment in the Castle*

Enter CONRAD.

Conrad. So, I am safe emerged from these broils!

Amid the wreck of thousands I am whole;
For every crime I have a laurel-wreath,
For every lie a lordship. Nor yet has
My ship of fortune furl'd her silken sails, —
Let her glide on! This danger'd neck is
saved,

By dexterous policy, from the rebel's axe;
And of my ducal palace not one stone
Is bruised by the Hungarian petards.
Toil hard, ye slaves, and from the miser-
earth

Bring forth once more my bullion, treas-
ured deep,

With all my jewel'd salvers, silver and
gold,

And precious goblets that make rich the
wine.

But why do I stand babbling to myself?

Where is Auranthe? I have news for
her

Shall —

Enter AURANTHE.

Auranthe. Conrad! what tidings? Good,
if I may guess

From your alert eyes and high-lifted brows.
What tidings of the battle? Albert? Lu-
dolph? Otho?

Conrad. You guess aright. And, sister,
slurring o'er

Our by-gone quarrels, I confess my heart
Is beating with a child's anxiety,
To make our golden fortune known to
you.

Auranthe. So serious?

Conrad. Yes, so serious, that before
I utter even the shadow of a hint
Concerning what will make that sin-worn
cheek

Blush joyous blood through every lineam-
ent,

You must make here a solemn vow to
me.

Auranthe. I pr'ythee, Conrad, do not
overact

The hypocrite. What vow would you im-
pose?

Conrad. Trust me for once. That you
may be assured

'Tis not confiding to a broken reed,
A poor court-bankrupt, outwitted and lost,

Revolve these facts in your acutest mood,
In such a mood as now you listen to me:—
A few days since, I was an open rebel,—
Against the Emperor, had suborn'd his
son,—

Drawn off his nobles to revolt,—and
shown

Contented fools causes for discontent,
Fresh hatched in my ambition's eagle-nest;
So thrived I as a rebel,—and, behold! 40
Now I am Otho's favourite, his dear friend,
His right hand, his brave Conrad.

Auranthe. I confess
You have intrigued with these unsteady
times

To admiration; but to be a favourite—

Conrad. I saw my moment. The Hun-
garians,

Collected silently in holes and corners,
Appear'd, a sudden host, in the open day.
I should have perish'd in our empire's
wreck,

But, calling interest loyalty, swore faith
To most believing Otho; and so help'd 50
His blood-stain'd ensigns to the victory
In yesterday's hard fight, that it has turn'd
The edge of his sharp wrath to eager kind-
ness.

Auranthe. So far yourself. But what is
this to me

More than that I am glad? I congratulate
you.

Conrad. Yes, sister, but it does regard
you greatly,

Nearly, momentarily,—aye, painfully!
Make me this vow—

Auranthe. Concerning whom or what?

Conrad. Albert!

Auranthe. I would inquire somewhat of
him:

You had a letter from me touching him? 60
No treason 'gainst his head in deed or
word!

Surely you spared him at my earnest
prayer?

Give me the letter—it should not ex-
ist!

Conrad. At one pernicious charge of the
enemy,

I, for a moment-whiles, was prisoner ta'en
And rifled,—stuff! the horses' hoofs have
minced it!

Auranthe. He is alive?

Conrad. He is! but here make oath
To alienate him from your scheming brain,
Divorce him from your solitary thoughts,
And cloud him in such utter banishment, 70
That when his person meets again your
eye,

Your vision shall quite lose its memory,
And wander past him as through vacancy.

Auranthe. I'll not be perjured.

Conrad. No, nor great, nor mighty;
You would not wear a crown, or rule a
kingdom.

To you it is indifferent.

Auranthe. What means this?

Conrad. You'll not be perjured! Go to
Albert then,

That camp-mushroom—dishonour of our
house.

Go, page his dusty heels upon a march,
Furbish his jingling baldric while he sleeps,
And share his mouldy ration in a siege. 81
Yet stay,—perhaps a charm may call you
back,

And make the widening circlets of your
eyes

Sparkle with healthy fevers.—The Em-
peror

Hath given consent that you should marry
Ludolph!

Auranthe. Can it be, brother? For a
golden crown

With a queen's awful lips I doubly thank
you!

This is to wake in Paradise! Farewell
Thou clod of yesterday—'t was not my-
self!

Not till this moment did I ever feel 90
My spirit's faculties! I'll flatter you
For this, and be you ever proud of it;
Thou, Jove-like, struck'st thy forehead,
And from the teeming marrow of thy brain

I spring complete Minerva! but the prince —

His highness Ludolph — where is he?

Conrad. I know not:

When, lacking my counsel at a beck,
The rebel lords, on bended knees, received
The Emperor's pardon, Ludolph kept aloof,
Sole, in a stiff, fool-hardy, sulky pride; 100
Yet, for all this, I never saw a father
In such a sickly longing for his son.
We shall soon see him, for the Emperor
He will be here this morning.

Auranthe. That I heard
Among the midnight rumours from the camp.

Conrad. You give up Albert to me?

Auranthe. Harm him not!

E'en for his highness Ludolph's sceptry hand,

I would not Albert suffer any wrong.

Conrad. Have I not laboured, plotted —?

Auranthe. See you spare him:

Nor be pathetic, my kind benefactor! 110

On all the many bounties of your hand, —

'T was for yourself you laboured — not for me!

Do you not count, when I am queen, to take

Advantage of your chance discoveries
Of my poor secrets, and so hold a rod
Over my life?

Conrad. Let not this slave — this villain —

Be cause of feud between us. See! he comes!

Look, woman, look, your Albert is quite safe!

In haste it seems. Now shall I be in the way,

And wish'd with silent curses in my grave,
Or side by side with' whelmed mariners. 121

Enter ALBERT.

Albert. Fair on your graces fall this early morrow!

So it is like to do without my prayers,
For your right noble names, like favourite tunes,

Have fallen full frequent from our Emperor's lips,

High commented with smiles.

Auranthe.

Noble Albert!

Conrad (aside). Noble!

Auranthe. Such salutation argues a glad heart

In our prosperity. We thank you, sir.

Albert.

Lady!

O, would to Heaven your poor servant

Could do you better service than mere words! 130

But I have other greeting than mine own,
From no less man than Otho, who has sent
This ring as pledge of dearest amity;

'Tis chosen I hear from Hymen's jewelry,

And you will prize it, lady, I doubt not,

Beyond all pleasures past, and all to come.

To you great duke —

Conrad. To me! What of me, ha?

Albert. What pleased your grace to say?

Conrad. Your message, sir!

Albert. You mean not this to me?

Conrad. Sister, this way;

For there shall be no 'gentle Alberts' now,
[*Aside.*

No 'sweet Auranthes!'

[*Exeunt CONRAD and AURANTHE.* 141

Albert (solus). The duke is out of temper;
if he knows

More than a brother of his sister ought,

I should not quarrel with his peevishness.

Auranthe — Heaven preserve her always fair! —

Is in the heady, proud, ambitious vein;

I bicker not with her, — bid her farewell!

She has taken flight from me, then let her soar, —

He is a fool who stands at pining gaze!

But for poor Ludolph, he is food for sorrow: 150

No leveling bluster of my licensed thoughts,

No military swagger of my mind,

Can smother from myself the wrong I've done him, —

Without design indeed, — yet it is so, —

And opiate for the conscience have I none!
[*Exit.*

SCENE II. — *The Court-yard of the Castle*

Martial Music. Enter, from the outer gate, Otho, Nobles, Knights, and Attendants. The Soldiers halt at the gate, with Banners in sight.

Otho. Where is my noble Herald ?

Enter CONRAD, from the Castle, attended by two Knights and Servants. ALBERT following.

Well, hast told

Auranthe our intent imperial ?

Lest our rent banners, too o' the sudden
shown,

Should fright her silken casements, and
dismay

Her household to our lack of entertain-
ment.

A victory !

Conrad. God save illustrious Otho !

Otho. Aye, Conrad, it will pluck out all
gray hairs ;

It is the best physician for the spleen ;

The courtliest inviter to a feast ;

The subtlest excuser of small faults ; 10

And a nice judge in the age and smack of
wine.

Enter from the Castle, AURANTHE, followed by Pages, holding up her robes, and a train of Women. She kneels.

Hail my sweet hostess ! I do thank the
stars,

Or my good soldiers, or their ladies' eyes,

That, after such a merry battle fought,

I can, all safe in body and in soul,

Kiss your fair hand and lady fortune's too.

My ring ! now, on my life, it doth rejoice

These lips to feel 't on this soft ivory !

Keep it, my brightest daughter ; it may
prove

The little prologue to a line of kings. 20

I strove against thee and my hot-blood son,

Dull blockhead that I was to be so blind,

But now my sight is clear ; forgive me,
lady.

Auranthe. My lord, I was a vassal to
your frown,

And now your favour makes me but more
humble ;

In wintry winds the simple snow is safe,

But fadeth at the greeting of the sun :

Unto thine anger I might well have spoken,

Taking on me a woman's privilege,

But this so sudden kindness makes me
dumb. 30

Otho. What need of this ? Enough, if
you will be

A potent tutoress to my wayward boy.

And teach him, what it seems his nurse
could not,

To say, for once, I thank you ! Sigifred !

Albert. He has not yet returned, my
gracious liege.

Otho. What then ! No tidings of my
friendly Arab ?

Conrad. None, mighty Otho.

[*To one of his Knights who goes out.*

Send forth instantly

An hundred horsemen from my honoured
gates,

To scour the plains and search the cot-
tages.

Cry a reward, to him who shall first bring
News of that vanished Arabian, 40

A full-heap'd helmet of the purest gold.

Otho. More thanks, good Conrad ; for,
except my son's,

There is no face I rather would behold

Than that same quick-eyed pagan's. By
the saints,

This coming night of banquets must not
light

Her dazzling torches ; nor the music
breathe

Smooth, without clashing cymbal, tones of
peace

And in-door melodies ; nor the ruddy wine
Ebb spouting to the lees ; if I pledge not, 50

In my first cup, that Arab !

Albert.

Mighty Monarch,

I wonder not this stranger's victor-deeds

So hang upon your spirit. Twice in the
fight

It was my chance to meet his olive brow,
Triumphant in the enemy's shatter'd
rhomb;

And, to say truth, in any Christian arm
I never saw such prowess.

Otho. Did you ever?
O, 't is a noble boy! — tut! — what do I
say?

I mean a triple Saladin, whose eyes,
When in the glorious scuffle they met
mine, 60

Seem'd to say — 'Sleep, old man, in safety
sleep;
I am the victory!'

Conrad. Pity he's not here.

Otho. And my son too, pity he is not
here.

Lady Auranthe, I would not make you
blush,

But can you give a guess where Ludolph
is?

Know you not of him?

Auranthe. Indeed, my liege, no secret —

Otho. Nay, nay, without more words,
dost know of him?

Auranthe. I would I were so over-fortu-
nate,

Both for his sake and mine, and to make
glad

A father's ears with tidings of his son. 70

Otho. I see 't is like to be a tedious day.
Were Theodore and Gonfred and the rest
Sent forth with my commands?

Albert. Aye, my lord.

Otho. And no news! No news! 'Faith!
't is very strange

He thus avoids us. Lady, is 't not strange?
Will he be truant to you too? It is a
shame.

Conrad. Will 't please your highness en-
ter, and accept,
The unworthy welcome of your servant's
house?

Leaving your cares to one whose diligence
May in few hours make pleasures of them
all. 80

Otho. Not so tedious, Conrad. No, no,
no, —

I must see Ludolph or the — What's that
shout?

Voices without. Huzza! huzza! Long live
the Emperor!

Other voices. Fall back! Away there!

Otho. Say what noise is that?

ALBERT advancing from the back of the
Stage, whither he had hastened on hearing
the cheers of the soldiery.

Albert. It is young Gersa, the Hungarian
prince,

Pick'd like a red stag from the fallow herd
Of prisoners. Poor prince, forlorn he steps,
Slow, and demure, and proud in his de-
spair.

If I may judge by his so tragic bearing, 89
His eye not downcast, and his folded arm,
He doth this moment wish himself asleep
Among his fallen captains on yon plains.

Enter GERSA, in chains, and guarded.

Otho. Well said, Sir Albert.

Gersa. Not a word of greeting,
No welcome to a princely visitor,
Most mighty Otho? Will not my great
host

Vouchsafe a syllable, before he bids
His gentlemen conduct me with all care
To some securest lodging — cold perhaps!

Otho. What mood is this? Hath fortune
touch'd thy brain?

Gersa. O kings and princes of this fev'-
rous world, 100

What abject things, what mockeries must
ye be,

What nerveless minions of safe palaces!
When here, a monarch, whose proud foot
is used

To fallen princes' necks, as to his stirrup,
Must needs exclaim that I am mad for-
sooth,

Because I cannot flatter with bent knees
My conqueror!

Otho. Gersa, I think you wrong me:
I think I have a better fame abroad.

Gersa. I pr'ythee mock me not with gen-
tle speech, 109

But, as a favour, bid me from thy presence;
Let me no longer be the wondering food
Of all these eyes; pr'ythee command me
hence!

Otho. Do not mistake me, Gersa. That
you may not,

Come, fair Auranthe, try if your soft hands
Can manage those hard rivets to set free
So brave a prince and soldier.

Auranthe (sets him free). Welcome task!

Gersa. I am wound up in deep astonish-
ment!

Thank you, fair lady. *Otho!* emperor!
You rob me of myself; my dignity
Is now your infant; I am a weak child. 120

Otho. Give me your hand, and let this
kindly grasp

Live in our memories.

Gersa. In mine it will.

I blush to think of my unchasten'd tongue;
But I was haunted by the monstrous ghost
Of all our slain battalions. Sire, reflect,
And pardon you will grant, that, at this
hour,

The bruised remnants of our stricken camp
Are huddling undistinguish'd my dear
friends,

With common thousands, into shallow
graves.

Otho. Enough, most noble Gersa. You
are free 130

To cheer the brave remainder of your host
By your own healing presence, and that
too,

Not as their leader merely, but their king;
For, as I hear, the wily enemy,
Who eased the crownet from your infant
brows,

Bloody Taraxa, is among the dead.

Gersa. Then I retire, so generous *Otho*
please,

Bearing with me a weight of benefits
Too heavy to be borne.

Otho. It is not so;

Still understand me, King of Hungary, 140
Nor judge my open purposes awry.

Though I did hold you high in my esteem
For your self's sake, I do not personate

The stage-play emperor to entrap applause,
To set the silly sort o' the world agape,
And make the politic smile; no, I have
heard

How in the Council you condemn'd this
war,

Urging the perfidy of broken faith, —
For that I am your friend.

Gersa. If ever, sire,

You are my enemy, I dare here swear 150
'T will not be Gersa's fault. *Otho*, fare-
well!

Otho. Will you return, Prince, to our
banqueting?

Gersa. As to my father's board I will
return.

Otho. Conrad, with all due ceremony,
give

The prince a regal escort to his camp;
Albert, go thou and bear him company.

Gersa, farewell!

Gersa. All happiness attend you!

Otho. Return with what good speed you
may; for soon

We must consult upon our terms of peace.

[*Eceunt GERSA and ALBERT with others.*

And thus a marble column do I build 160
To prop my empire's dome. Conrad, in
thee

I have another steadfast one, to uphold
The portals of my state; and, for my own
Pre-eminence and safety, I will strive
To keep thy strength upon its pedestal.
For, without thee, this day I might have
been

A show-monster about the streets of Prague,
In chains, as just now stood that noble
prince:

And then to me no mercy had been shown,
For when the conquer'd lion is once dun-
geon'd, 170

Who lets him forth again? or dares to
give

An old lion sugar-cakes of mild reprieve?
Not to thine ear alone I make confession,
But to all here, as, by experience,
I know how the great basement of all
power

Is frankness, and a true tongue to the world;

And how intriguing secrecy is proof
Of fear and weakness, and a hollow state.
Conrad, I owe thee much.

Conrad. To kiss that hand,
My emperor, is ample recompense, 180
For a mere act of duty.

Otho. Thou art wrong;
For what can any man on earth do more?
We will make trial of your house's wel-
come,

My bright Auranthe!

Conrad. How is Friedburg honoured!

Enter ETHELBERT and six Monks.

Ethelbert. The benison of heaven on your head,

Imperial Otho!

Otho. Who stays me? Speak! Quick!
Ethelbert. Pause but one moment, mighty conqueror!

Upon the threshold of this house of joy.

Otho. Pray, do not prose, good Ethelbert,
but speak

What is your purpose.

Ethelbert. The restoration of some cap-
tive maids, 190

Devoted to Heaven's pious ministries,
Who, driven forth from their religious
cells,

And kept in thralldom by our enemy,
When late this province was a lawless spoil,
Still weep amid the wild Hungarian camp,
Though hemm'd around by thy victorious
arms.

Otho. Demand the holy sisterhood in our
name

From Gersa's tents. Farewell, old Ethel-
bert.

Ethelbert. The saints will bless you for
this pious care.

Otho. Daughter, your hand; Ludolph's
would fit it best. 200

Conrad. Ho! let the music sound!

*[Music. ETHELBERT raises his hands, as in
benediction of OTHO. Exeunt severally.]*

The scene closes on them.

SCENE III. — *The Country, with the
Castle in the distance*

Enter LUDOLPH and SIGIFRED.

Ludolph. You have my secret; let it not
be breathed.

Sigifred. Still give me leave to wonder
that the Prince

Ludolph and the swift Arab are the same;
Still to rejoice that 't was a German
arm

Death doing in a turban'd masquerade.

Ludolph. The emperor must not know it,
Sigifred.

Sigifred. I pry'thee, why? What hap-
pier hour of time

Could thy pleased star point down upon
from heaven

With silver index, bidding thee make
peace?

Ludolph. Still it must not be known, good
Sigifred; 10

The star may point oblique.

Sigifred. If Otho knew
His son to be that unknown Mussulman,
After whose spurring heels he sent me
forth,

With one of his well-pleased Olympian
oaths,

The charters of man's greatness, at this
hour

He would be watching round the castle
walls,

And, like an anxious warder, strain his
sight

For the first glimpse of such a son re-
turn'd —

Ludolph, that blast of the Hungarians,
That Saracenic meteor of the fight, 20
That silent fury, whose fell scimitar
Kept danger all aloof from Otho's head,
And left him space for wonder.

Ludolph. Say no more.

Not as a swordsman would I pardon claim,
But as a son. The bronzed centurion,
Long toil'd in foreign wars, and whose high
deeds

Are shaded in a forest of tall spears,

Known only to his troop, hath greater plea
Of favour with my sire than I can have.

Sigifred. My lord, forgive me that I cannot see 30

How this proud temper with clear reason
squares.

What made you then, with such an anxious
love,

Hover around that life, whose bitter days
You vex with bad revolt? Was 't opium,
Or the mad-fumed wine? Nay, do not
frown,

I rather would grieve with you than up-
braid.

Ludolph. I do believe you. No, 't was not
to make

A father his son's debtor, or to heal
His deep heart-sickness for a rebel child.

'T was done in memory of my boyish days,
Poor cancel for his kindness to my youth, 41

For all his calming of my childish griefs,
And all his smiles upon my merriment.

No, not a thousand foughten fields could
sponge

Those days paternal from my memory,
Though now upon my head he heaps dis-
grace.

Sigifred. My prince, you think too
harshly —

Ludolph. Can I so?

Hath he not gall'd my spirit to the quick?
And with a sullen rigour obstinate 49

Pour'd out a phial of wrath upon my faults?
Hunted me as the Tartar does the boar,

Driven me to the very edge o' the world,
And almost put a price upon my head?

Sigifred. Remember how he spared the
rebel lords.

Ludolph. Yes, yes, I know he hath a no-
ble nature

That cannot trample on the fallen. But
his

Is not the only proud heart in his realm.
He hath wrong'd me, and I have done him
wrong;

He hath loved me, and I have shown him
kindness;

We should be almost equal.

Sigifred. Yet, for all this,
I would you had appear'd among those
lords, 61

And ta'en his favour.
Ludolph. Ha! till now I thought
My friend had held poor Ludolph's honour
dear.

What! would you have me sue before his
throne

And kiss the courtier's missal, its silk
steps?

Or hug the golden housings of his steed,
Amid a camp, whose steeled swarms I
dared

But yesterday? And, at the trumpet
sound,

Bow like some unknown mercenary's flag
And lick the soiled grass? No, no, my
friend, 70

I would not, I, be pardon'd in the heap,
And bless indemnity with all that scum, —

Those men I mean, who on my shoulders
propp'd

Their weak rebellion, winning me with
lies,

And pitying forsooth my many wrongs;
Poor self-deceived wretches, who must
think

Each one himself a king in embryo,
Because some dozen vassals cried — my
lord!

Cowards, who never knew their little hearts,
Till flurried danger held the mirror up, 80

And then they own'd themselves without a
blush,

Curling, like spaniels, round my father's
feet.

Such things deserted me and are forgiven,
While I, less guilty, am an outcast still,

And will be, for I love such fair disgrace.

Sigifred. I know the clear truth; so

would Otho see,
For he is just and noble. Fain would I
Be pleader for you —

Ludolph. He 'll hear none of it
You know his temper, hot, proud, obstinate
Endanger not yourself so uselessly. 90

I will encounter his thwart spleen myself,

To-day, at the Duke Conrad's, where he keeps

His crowded state after the victory,
There will I be, a most unwelcome guest,
And parley with him, as a son should do,
Who doubly loathes a father's tyranny;
Tell him how feeble is that tyranny;
How the relationship of father and son
Is no more valid than a silken leash
Where lions tug adverse, if love grow not
From interchanged love through many
years. 101

Aye, and those turreted Franconian walls,
Like to a jealous casket, hold my pearl —
My fair Auranthe! Yes, I will be there.

Sigifred. Be not so rash; wait till his
wrath shall pass,

Until his royal spirit softly ebbs
Self-influenced; then, in his morning dreams
He will forgive thee, and awake in grief
To have not thy good morrow.

Ludolph. Yes, to-day
I must be there, while her young pulses
beat 110

Among the new-plumed minions of the
war.

Have you seen her of late? No? Auranthe,

Franconia's fair sister, 't is I mean.

She should be paler for my troublous
days —

And there it is — my father's iron lips
Have sworn divorcement 'twixt me and my
right.

Sigifred (aside). Auranthe! I had hoped
this whim had pass'd.

Ludolph. And, Sigifred, with all his love
of justice,

When will he take that grandchild in his
arms,

That, by my love I swear, shall soon be
his? 120

This reconciliation is impossible,

For see — but who are these?

Sigifred. They are messengers
From our great emperor; to you, I doubt
not,

For couriers are abroad to seek you out.

Enter THEODORE and GONFRED.

Theodore. Seeing so many vigilant eyes
explore

The province to invite your highness back
To your high dignities, we are too happy.

Gonfred. We have eloquence to colour
justly

The emperor's anxious wishes.

Ludolph. Go. I follow you.

[*Exeunt THEODORE and GONFRED.*

I play the prude: it is but venturing —
Why should he be so earnest? Come, my

friend, 131

Let us to Friedburg castle.

ACT II

SCENE I. — *An antechamber in the Castle*

Enter LUDOLPH and SIGIFRED.

Ludolph. No more advices, no more cau-
tioning;

I leave it all to fate — to any thing!
I cannot square my conduct to time, place,
Or circumstance; to me 't is all a mist!

Sigifred. I say no more.

Ludolph. It seems I am to wait
Here in the anteroom; — that may be a
trifle.

You see now how I dance attendance here,
Without that tyrant temper, you so blame,
Snapping the rein. You have medicined
me

With good advices; and I here remain, 10
In this most honourable anteroom,
Your patient scholar.

Sigifred. Do not wrong me, Prince.
By Heavens, I'd rather kiss Duke Conrad's
slipper,

When in the morning he doth yawn with
pride,

Than see you humbled but a half-degree!
Truth is, the Emperor would fain dismiss
The Nobles ere he sees you.

Enter GONFRED from the Council-room.

Ludolph. Well, sir! what?

Gonfred. Great honour to the Prince !
 The Emperor,
 Hearing that his brave son had reappeared,
 Instant dismiss'd the Council from his
 sight, 20
 As Jove fans off the clouds. Even now
 they pass. [Exit.

Enter the Nobles from the Council-room.
They cross the Stage, bowing with respect
to LUDOLPH, he frowning on them. CON-
RAD follows. Exeunt Nobles.

Ludolph. Not the discoloured poisons of
 a fen,
 Which he, who breathes, feels warning of
 his death,
 Could taste so nauseous to the bodily sense,
 As these prodigious sycophants disgust
 The soul's fine palate.

Conrad. Princely Ludolph, hail !
 Welcome, thou younger sceptre to the
 realm !
 Strength to thy virgin crownet's golden
 buds,
 That they, against the winter of thy sire,
 May burst, and swell, and flourish round
 thy brows, 30

Maturing to a weighty diadem !
 Yet be that hour far off; and may he live,
 Who waits for thee, as the chapp'd earth
 for rain.
 Set my life's star ! I have lived long
 enough,

Since under my glad roof, propitiously,
 Father and son each other re-possess.

Ludolph. Fine wording, Duke ! but words
 could never yet

Forestall the fates; have you not learnt that
 yet ?

Let me look well: your features are the
 same;

Your gait the same; your hair of the same
 shade; 40

As one I knew some passed weeks ago,
 Who sung far different notes into mine
 ears.

I have mine own particular comments on 't;
 You have your own, perhaps.

Conrad. My gracious Prince,
 All men may err. In truth I was deceived
 In your great father's nature, as you were.
 Had I known that of him I have since
 known,
 And what you soon will learn, I would have
 turn'd

My sword to my own throat, rather than
 held

Its threatening edge against a good King's
 quiet: 50

Or with one word fever'd you, gentle
 Prince,

Who seem'd to me, as rugged times then
 went,

Indeed too much oppress'd. May I be
 bold

To tell the Emperor you will haste to him ?

Ludolph. Your Dukedom's privilege will
 grant so much.

[Exit CONRAD.

He's very close to Otho, a tight leech !
 Your hand — I go ! Ha ! here the thunder
 comes

Sullen against the wind ! If in two angry
 brows

My safety lies, then Sigifred, I'm safe.

Enter OTHO and CONRAD.

Otho. Will you make Titan play the
 lackey-page 60
 To chattering pigmies ? I would have you
 know

That such neglect of our high Majesty
 Annuls all feel of kindred. What is son, —
 Or friend — or brother — or all ties of
 blood, —

When the whole kingdom, centred in our-
 self,

Is rudely slighted ? Who am I to wait ?
 By Peter's chair ! I have upon my tongue
 A word to fright the proudest spirit
 here ! —

Death ! — and slow tortures to the hardy
 fool,

Who dares take such large charter from
 our smiles ! 70

Conrad, we would be private ! Sigifred !

Off! And none pass this way on pain of death!

[*Exeunt* CONRAD and SIGIFRED.]

Ludolph. This was but half expected, my good sire,

Yet I am grieved at it, to the full height,
As though my hopes of favour had been whole.

Otho. How you indulge yourself! What can you hope for?

Ludolph. Nothing, my liege, I have to hope for nothing.

I come to greet you as a loving son,
And then depart, if I may be so free,
Seeing that blood of yours in my warm veins

Has not yet mitigated into milk.

Otho. What would you, sir?

Ludolph. A lenient banishment;
So please you let me unmolested pass
This Conrad's gates, to the wide air again.
I want no more. A rebel wants no more.

Otho. And shall I let a rebel loose again
To muster kites and eagles 'gainst my head?

No, obstinate boy, you shall be kept caged up,

Served with harsh food, with scum for Sunday-drink.

Ludolph. Indeed!

Otho. And chains too heavy for your life:
I'll choose a jailer, whose swart monstrous face

Shall be a hell to look upon, and she —

Ludolph. Ha!

Otho. Shall be your fair Auranthe.

Ludolph. Amaze! Amaze!

Otho. To-day you marry her.

Ludolph. This is a sharp jest!

Otho. No. None at all. When have I said a lie?

Ludolph. If I sleep not, I am a waking wretch.

Otho. Not a word more. Let me embrace my child.

Ludolph. I dare not. 'T would pollute so good a father!

O heavy crime! that your son's blinded eyes

Could not see all his parent's love aright,
As now I see it. Be not kind to me —
Punish me not with favour.

Otho. Are you sure,

Ludolph, you have no saving plea in store?

Ludolph. My father, none!

Otho. Then you astonish me.

Ludolph. No, I have no plea. Disobedience,

Rebellion, obstinacy, blasphemy,
Are all my counsellors. If they can make
My crooked deeds show good and plausible,
Then grant me loving pardon, but not else,
Good Gods! not else, in any way, my liege!

Otho. You are a most perplexing, noble boy.

Ludolph. You not less a perplexing noble father.

Otho. Well, you shall have free passport through the gates.

Farewell!

Ludolph. Farewell! and by these tears believe,

And still remember, I repent in pain
All my misdeeds!

Otho. *Ludolph,* I will! I will!

But, *Ludolph,* ere you go, I would inquire
If you, in all your wandering, ever met
A certain Arab haunting in these parts.

Ludolph. No, my good lord, I cannot say I did.

Otho. Make not your father blind before his time;

Nor let these arms paternal hunger more
For an embrace, to dull the appetite
Of my great love for thee, my supreme child!

Come close, and let me breathe into thine ear.

I knew you through disguise. You are the Arab!

You can't deny it. [*Embracing him.*]

Ludolph. Happiest of days!

Otho. We'll make it so.

Ludolph. 'Stead of one fatted calf
Ten hecatombs shall bellow out their last,
Smote 'twixt the horns by the death-stunning mace

Of Mars, and all the soldiery shall feast
Nobly as Nimrod's masons, when the
towers

Of Nineveh new kiss'd the parted clouds !
Otho. Large as a God speak out, where
all is thine.

Ludolph. Ay, father, but the fire in my
sad breast

Is quench'd with inward tears ! I must
rejoice

For you, whose wings so shadow over me
In tender victory, but for myself
I still must mourn. The fair Auranthe
mine !

Too great a boon ! I pr'ythee let me ask
What more than I know of could so have
changed

Your purpose touching her.

Otho. At a word, this:
In no deed did you give me more offence
Than your rejection of Erminia.

To my appalling, I saw too good proof
Of your keen-eyed suspicion, — she is
naught !

Ludolph. You are convinced ?

Otho. Ay, spite of her sweet looks.
O, that my brother's daughter should so fall !
Her fame has pass'd into the grosser lips
Of soldiers in their cups.

Ludolph. 'Tis very sad.

Otho. No more of her. Auranthe — Lu-
dolph, come !

This marriage be the bond of endless peace !
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. — *The entrance of GERSA'S
Tent in the Hungarian Camp*

Enter ERMINIA.

Erminia. Where ! where ! where shall I
find a messenger ?

A trusty soul ? A good man in the camp ?
Shall I go myself ? Monstrous wicked-
ness !

O cursed Conrad ! devilish Auranthe !
Here is proof palpable as the bright sun !
O for a voice to reach the Emperor's ears !
[*Shouts in the camp.*]

Enter an HUNGARIAN CAPTAIN.

Captain. Fair prisoner, you hear those
joyous shouts ?

The king — aye, now our king, — but still
your slave,

Young Gersa, from a short captivity
Has just return'd. He bids me say, bright
dame,

That even the homage of his ranged chiefs
Cures not his keen impatience to behold
Such beauty once again. What ails you,
lady ?

Erminia. Say, is not that a German, you-
der ? There !

Captain. Methinks by his stout bearing
he should be —

Yes — it is Albert ; a brave German knight,
And much in the Emperor's favour.

Erminia. I would fain
Inquire of friends and kinsfolk ; how they
fared

In these rough times. Brave soldier, as
you pass

To royal Gersa with my humble thanks, 30
Will you send yonder knight to me ?

Captain. I will. [*Exit.*]

Erminia. Yes, he was ever known to be
a man

Frank, open, generous ; Albert I may trust.
O proof ! proof ! proof ! Albert's an
honest man ;

Not Ethelbert the monk, if he were here,
Would I hold more trustworthy. Now !

Enter ALBERT.

Albert. Good Gods !

Lady Erminia ! are you prisoner
In this beleaguer'd camp ? Or are you
here

Of your own will ? You pleased to send
for me.

By Venus, 't is a pity I knew not 30
Your plight before, and, by her Son, I
swear

To do you every service you can ask.
What would the fairest — ?

Erminia. Albert, will you swear ?

Albert. I have. Well ?

Erminia. Albert, you have fame to lose.
If men, in court and camp, lie not outright,
You should be, from a thousand, chosen
forth

To do an honest deed. Shall I confide — ?

Albert. Aye, any thing to me, fair crea-
ture. Do ;

Dictate my task. Sweet woman, —

Erminia. Truce with that.
You understand me not ; and, in your
speech, 40

I see how far the slander is abroad.

Without proof could you think me inno-
cent ?

Albert. Lady, I should rejoice to know
you so.

Erminia. If you have any pity for a
maid,

Suffering a daily death from evil tongues ;
Any compassion for that Emperor's niece,
Who, for your bright sword and clear hon-
esty,

Lifted you from the crowd of common men
Into the lap of honour ; — save me, knight !

Albert. How ? Make it clear ; if it be
possible, 50

I by the banner of Saint Maurice swear
To right you.

Erminia. Possible ! — Easy. O my
heart !

This letter's not so soil'd but you may
read it ; —

Possible ! There — that letter ! Read —
read it. [Gives him a letter.]

ALBERT (reading).

'To the Duke Conrad. — Forget the
threat you made at parting, and I will for-
get to send the Emperor letters and papers
of yours I have become possessed of. His
life is no trifle to me ; his death you shall
find none to yourself.' (*Speaks to himself.*)
'Tis me — my life that's pleaded for !
(*Reads.*) 'He, for his own sake, will be
dumb as the grave. Erminia has my shame
fix'd upon her, sure as a wen. We are
safe.

'AURANTHE.'

A she-devil ! A dragon ! I her imp !
Fire of Hell ! Auranthe — lewd demon !
Where got you this ? Where ? When ?

Erminia. I found it in the tent, among
some spoils

Which, being noble, fell to Gersa's lot. 70
Come in, and see.

[*They go in and return.*]

Albert. Villainy ! Villainy !
Conrad's sword, his corslet, and his helm,
And his letter. Caitiff, he shall feel —

Erminia. I see you are thunderstruck.
Haste, haste away !

Albert. O, I am tortured by this villainy.

Erminia. You needs must be. Carry it
swift to Otho ;

Tell him, moreover, I am prisoner
Here in this camp, where all the sisterhood,
Forced from their quiet cells, are parcel'd
out

For slaves among these Huns. Away !
Away ! 80

Albert. I am gone.

Erminia. Swift be your steed ! Within
this hour

The Emperor will see it.

Albert. Ere I sleep :

That I can swear. [Hurries out.]

Gersa (without). Brave captains ! thanks.
Enough

Of loyal homage now !

Enter GERSA.

Erminia. Hail, royal Hun !

Gersa. What means this, fair one ? Why
in such alarm ?

Who was it hurried by me so distract ?

It seem'd you were in deep discourse to-
gether ;

Your doctrine has not been so harsh to
him

As to my poor deserts. Come, come, be
plain.

I am no jealous fool to kill you both, 90
Or, for such trifles, rob th' adorned world
Of such aauteous vestal.

Erminia. I grieve, my Lord,
To hear you condescend to ribald-phrase.

Gersa. This is too much ! Hearken, my lady pure !

Erminia. Silence ! and hear the magic of a name —

Erminia ! I am she, — the Emperor's niece !

Praised be the Heavens, I now dare own myself !

Gersa. *Erminia !* Indeed ! I've heard of her.

Pr'ythee, fair lady, what chance brought you here ? 99

Erminia. Ask your own soldiers.

Gersa. And you dare own your name. For loveliness you may — and for the rest My vein is not censorious.

Erminia. Alas ! poor me ! 'T is false indeed.

Gersa. Indeed you are too fair : The swan, soft leaning on her fledgy breast, When to the stream she launches, looks not back

With such a tender grace ; nor are her wings So white as your soul is, if that but be Twin picture to your face, *Erminia !*

To-day, for the first day, I am a king, 109 Yet would I give my unworn crown away To know you spotless.

Erminia. Trust me one day more, Generously, without more certain guarantee,

Than this poor face you deign to praise so much ;

After that, say and do whate'er you please. If I have any knowledge of you, sir, I think, nay I am sure, you will grieve much

To hear my story. O be gentle to me, For I am sick and faint with many wrongs, Tired out, and weary-worn with contumelies. 119

Gersa. Poor lady !

Enter *ETHELBERT.*

Erminia. Gentle Prince, 't is false indeed. Good morrow, holy father ! I have had Your prayers, though I look'd for you in vain.

Ethelbert. Blessings upon you, daughter ! Sure you look

Too cheerful for these foul pernicious days. Young man, you heard this virgin say 't was false, —

'T is false, I say. What ! can you not employ

Your temper elsewhere, 'mong those burly tents,

But you must taunt this dove, for she hath lost

The Eagle Otho to beat off assault ?

Fie ! Fie ! But I will be her guard myself, 130

I' the Emperor's name. I here demand Herself, and all her sisterhood. She false !

Gersa. Peace ! peace, old man ! I cannot think she is.

Ethelbert. Whom I have known from her first infancy,

Baptized her in the bosom of the Church, Watch'd her, as anxious husbandmen the grain,

From the first shoot till the unripe mid-May,

Then to the tender ear of her June days, Which, lifting sweet abroad its timid green, Is blighted by the touch of calumny ; 140 You cannot credit such a monstrous tale.

Gersa. I cannot. Take her. Fair *Erminia,*

I follow you to Friedburg, — is 't not so ?

Erminia. Ay, so we purpose.

Ethelbert. Daughter, do you so ?

How's this ? I marvel ! Yet you look not mad.

Erminia. I have good news to tell you, *Ethelbert.*

Gersa. Ho ! ho, there ! Guards !

Your blessing, father ! Sweet *Erminia,* Believe me, I am well nigh sure —

Erminia. Farewell

Short time will show. [*Enter Chiefs.*

Yes, father *Ethelbert,* I have news precious as we pass along. 151

Ethelbert. Dear daughter, you shall guide me.

Erminia. To no ill.

Gersa. Command an escort to the Fried-
burg lines. [*Ezeunt Chiefs.*]

Pray let me lead. Fair lady, forget not
Gersa, how he believed you innocent.
I follow you to Friedburg with all speed.
[*Ezeunt.*]

ACT III

SCENE I. — *The Country*

Enter ALBERT.

Albert. O that the earth were empty, as
when Cain

Had no perplexity to hide his head !
Or that the sword of some brave enemy
Had put a sudden stop to my hot breath,
And hurl'd me down the illimitable gulf
Of times past, unremember'd ! Better so
Than thus fast-limed in a cursed snare,
The white limbs of a wanton. This the end
Of an aspiring life ! My boyhood past
In feud with wolves and bears, when no
eye saw 10

The solitary warfare, fought for love
Of honour 'mid the growling wilderness.
My sturdier youth, maturing to the sword,
Won by the syren-trumpets, and the ring
Of shields upon the pavement, when bright
mail'd
Henry the Fowler pass'd the streets of
Prague.

Was 't to this end I louted and became
The menial of Mars, and held a spear
Sway'd by command, as corn is by the
wind ?

Is it for this, I now am lifted up 20
By Europe's throned Emperor, to see
My honour be my executioner, —
My love of fame, my prided honesty
Put to the torture for confessional ?
Then the damn'd crime of blurring to the
world

A woman's secret ! — Though a fiend she
be,

Too tender of my ignominious life ;
But then to wrong the generous Emperor
In such a searching point, were to give up

My soul for foot-ball at Hell's holiday ! 30
I must confess, — and cut my throat, — to-
day ?

To-morrow ? Ho ! some wine !

Enter SIGIFRED.

Sigifred. A fine humour —
Albert. Who goes there ? Count Sigi-
fred ? Ha ! ha !

Sigifred. What, man, do you mistake the
hollow sky

For a throng'd tavern, — and these stubbed
trees

For old serge hangings, — me, your humble
friend,

For a poor waiter ? Why, man, how you
stare !

What gipsies have you been carousing
with ?

No, no more wine ; methinks you've had
enough. 39

Albert. You well may laugh and banter.
What a fool

An injury may make of a staid man !
You shall know all anon.

Sigifred. Some tavern brawl ?

Albert. 'T was with some people out of
common reach ;

Revenge is difficult.

Sigifred. I am your friend ;
We meet again to-day, and can confer
Upon it. For the present I'm in haste.

Albert. Whither ?

Sigifred. To fetch King *Gersa* to the
feast.

The Emperor on this marriage is so hot,
Pray Heaven it end not in apoplexy !
The very porters, as I pass'd the doors, 50
Heard his loud laugh, and answer'd in full
choir.

I marvel, *Albert*, you delay so long
From these bright revelries ; go, show your-
self,

You may be made a duke.

Albert. Ay, very like :
Pray, what day has his Highness fix'd
upon ?

Sigifred. For what ?

Albert. The marriage. What else can I mean ?

Sigifred. To-day. O, I forgot, you could not know;

The news is scarce a minute old with me.

Albert. Married to-day ! To-day ! You did not say so ?

Sigifred. Now, while I speak to you, their comely heads

60

Are bow'd before the mitre.

Albert. O ! monstrous !

Sigifred. What is this ?

Albert. Nothing, Sigifred. Farewell ! We'll meet upon our subject. Farewell, count ! *[Exit.*

Sigifred. Is this clear-headed Albert ? He brain-turn'd !

'Tis as portentous as a meteor. *[Exit.*

SCENE II. — *An Apartment in the Castle*

Enter as from the Marriage, OTHO, LUDOLPH, AURANTHE, CONRAD, Nobles, Knights, Ladies, etc. Music.

Otho. Now Ludolph ! Now, Auranthe ! Daughter fair !

What can I find to grace your nuptial day

More than my love, and these wide realms in fee ?

Ludolph. I have too much.

Auranthe. And I, my liege, by far.

Ludolph. Auranthe ! I have ! O, my bride, my love !

Not all the gaze upon us can restrain

My eyes, too long poor exiles from thy face,

From adoration, and my foolish tongue

From uttering soft responses to the love

I see in thy mute beauty beaming forth !

10

Fair creature, bless me with a single word !

All mine !

Auranthe. Spare, spare me, my Lord ; I swoon else.

Ludolph. Soft beauty ! by to-morrow I should die,

Wert thou not mine.

[They talk apart.]

1st Lady. How deep she has bewitch'd him !

1st Knight. Ask you for her recipe for love philtres.

2d Lady. They hold the Emperor in admiration.

Otho. If ever king was happy, that am I ! What are the cities 'yond the Alps to me,

The provinces about the Danube's mouth, The promise of fair sail beyond the Rhone ; Or routing out of Hyperborean hordes, 21 To these fair children, stars of a new age ? Unless perchance I might rejoice to win This little ball of earth, and chuck it them To play with !

Auranthe. Nay, my Lord, I do not know.

Ludolph. Let me not famish.

Otho (to Conrad). Good Franconia, You heard what oath I swear, as the sun rose,

That unless Heaven would send me back my son,

My Arab, — no soft music should enrich The cool wine, kiss'd off with a soldier's smack ;

30

Now all my empire, barter'd for one feast, Seems poverty.

Conrad. Upon the neighbour-plain The heralds have prepared a royal lists ; Your knights, found war-proof in the bloody field,

Speed to the game.

Otho. Well, Ludolph, what say you ?

Ludolph. My lord !

Otho. A tourney ?

Conrad. Or, if 't please you best —

Ludolph. I want no more !

1st Lady. He soars !

2d Lady. Past all reason.

Ludolph. Though heaven's choir Should in a vast circumference descend 39 And sing for my delight, I'd stop my ears ! Though bright Apollo's car stood burning here,

And he put out an arm to bid me mount, His touch an immortality, not I ! This earth, this palace, this room, Auranthe !

Otho. This is a little painful; just too much.
 Conrad, if he flames longer in this wise,
 I shall believe in wizard-woven loves
 And old romances; but I'll break the spell.
 Ludolph!

Conrad. He'll be calm, anon.
 Ludolph. You call'd!
 Yes, yes, yes, I offend. You must forgive me: 50
 Not being quite recover'd from the stun
 Of your large bounties. A tourney, is it not?

[A senet heard faintly.]

Conrad. The trumpets reach us.
 Ethelbert (without). On your peril, sirs,
 Detain us!

1st Voice (without). Let not the abbot pass.

2d Voice (without). No,
 On your lives!

1st Voice (without). Holy father, you must not.

Ethelbert (without). Otho!
 Otho. Who calls on Otho?
 Ethelbert (without). Ethelbert!
 Otho. Let him come in.

Enter ETHELBERT leading in ERMINIA.

Thou curs'd abbot, why
 Hast brought pollution to our holy rites?
 Hast thou no fear of hangman, or the fag-
 got?

Ludolph. What portent — what strange
 prodigy is this? 60

Conrad. Away!
 Ethelbert. You, Duke?
 Erminia. Albert has surely fail'd me!
 Look at the Emperor's brow upon me
 bent!

Ethelbert. A sad delay!
 Conrad. Away, thou guilty thing!
 Ethelbert. You again, Duke? Justice,
 most noble Otho!

You — go to your sister there and plot
 again,
 A quick plot, swift as thought to save your
 heads;

For lo! the toils are spread around your
 den,
 The world is all agape to see dragg'd forth
 Two ugly monsters.

Ludolph. What means he, my lord?
 Conrad. I cannot guess.

Ethelbert. Best ask your lady sister,
 Whether the riddle puzzles her beyond 71
 The power of utterance.

Conrad. Foul barbarian, cease;
 The Princess faints!

Ludolph. Stab him! O, sweetest wife!
 [Attendants bear off AURANTHE.]

Erminia. Alas!

Ethelbert. Your wife!

Ludolph. Ay, Satan! does that yerk ye?

Ethelbert. Wife! so soon!

Ludolph. Ay, wife! Oh, impudence!
 Thou bitter mischief! Venomous bad
 priest!

How dar'st thou lift those beetle brows at
 me?

Me — the prince Ludolph, in this presence
 here, 73

Upon my marriage day, and scandalize
 My joys with such opprobrious surprise?
 Wife! Why dost linger on that syllable,
 As if it were some demon's name pro-
 nounced

To summon harmful lightning, and make
 yawn
 The sleepy thunder? Hast no sense of
 fear?

No ounce of man in thy mortality?
 Tremble! for, at my nod, the sharpen'd axe
 Will make thy bold tongue quiver to the
 roots,

Those gray lids wink, and thou not know
 it, monk!

Ethelbert. O, poor deceived Prince! I
 pity thee! 89

Great Otho! I claim justice —

Ludolph. Thou shalt have't!
 Thine arms from forth a pulpit of hot fire
 Shall sprawl distracted! O that that dull
 cowl

Were some most sensitive portion of thy
 life,

That I might give it to my hounds to tear !
Thy girdle some fine zealous-pained nerve
To girth my saddle ! And those devil's
beads

Each one a life, that I might, every day,
Crush one with Vulcan's hammer !

Otho. Peace, my son ;
You far outstrip my spleen in this affair.
Let us be calm, and hear the abbot's plea
For this intrusion.

Ludolph. I am silent, sire.

Otho. Conrad, see all depart not wanted
here.

[*Exeunt Knights, Ladies, etc.*]

Ludolph. be calm. Ethelbert, peace awhile.
This mystery demands an audience
Of a just judge, and that will Otho be.

Ludolph. Why has he time to breathe
another word ?

Otho. Ludolph, old Ethelbert, be sure,
comes not

To beard us for no cause ; he's not the
man

To cry himself up an ambassador

Without credentials.

Ludolph. I'll chain up myself.

Otho. Old abbot, stand here forth. Lady
Erminia,

Sit. And now, abbot ! what have you to
say ?

Our ear is open. First we here denounce
Hard penalties against thee, if't be found
The cause for which you have disturb'd us
here,

Making our bright hours muddy, be a thing
Of little moment.

Ethelbert. See this innocent !

Otho. thou father of the people call'd.
Is her life nothing ? Her fair honour no-
thing ?

Her tears from matins until even-song
Nothing ? Her burst heart nothing ? Em-
peror !

Is this your gentle niece — the simplest
flower

Of the world's herbal — this fair lily
blanch'd

Still with the dews of piety, this meek lady

Here sitting like an angel newly-shed,
Who veils its snowy wings and grows all
pale, —

Is she nothing ?

Otho. What more to the purpose, abbot ?

Ludolph. Whither is he winding ?

Conrad. No clue yet !

Ethelbert. You have heard, my Liege, and
so, no doubt, all here,

Foul, poisonous, malignant whisperings ;
Nay open speech, rude mockery grown
common.

Against the spotless nature and clear fame
Of the princess Erminia, your niece.

I have intruded here thus suddenly,
Because I hold these base weeds, with tight
hand,

Which now disfigure her fair growing stem
Waiting but for your sign to pull them up
By the dark roots, and leave her palpable.
To all men's sight, a lady innocent.

The ignominy of that whisper'd tale
About a midnight gallant, seen to climb
A window to her chamber neighbour's
near,

I will from her turn off, and put the load
On the right shoulders ; on that wretch's
head,

Who, by close stratagems, did save her
self,

Chiefly by shifting to this lady's room
A rope-ladder for false witness.

Ludolph. Most atrocious.

Otho. Ethelbert, proceed.

Ethelbert. With sad lips I shall
For, in the healing of one wound, I fear
To make a greater. His young highness
here

To-day was married.

Ludolph. Good.

Ethelbert. Would it were good
Yet why do I delay to spread abroad
The names of those two vipers, from whose
jaw

A deadly breath went forth to taint and
blast

This guileless lady ?

Otho. Abbot, speak their names

Ethelbert. A minute first. It cannot be
— but may
I ask, great judge, if you to-day have put
A letter by unread?

Otho. Does 't end in this?
Conrad. Out with their names!
Ethelbert. Bold sinner, say you so?
Ludolph. Out, hideous monk!
Otho. Confess, or by the wheel—
Ethelbert. My evidence cannot be far
away; 161

And, though it never come, be on my head
The crime of passing an attain upon
The slanderers of this virgin.

Ludolph. Speak aloud!
Ethelbert. Auranthe, and her brother
there.

Conrad. Amaze!
Ludolph. Throw them from the win-
dows!

Otho. Do what you will!
Ludolph. What shall I do with them?
Something of quick dispatch, for should she
hear,

My soft Auranthe, her sweet mercy would
Prevail against my fury. Damned priest!
What swift death wilt thou die? As to the
lady, 171

I touch her not.

Ethelbert. Illustrious Otho, stay!
An ample store of misery thou hast,
Choke not the granary of thy noble mind
With more bad bitter grain, too difficult
A cud for the repentance of a man
Gray-growing. To thee only I appeal,
Not to thy noble son, whose yeasting youth
Will clear itself, and crystal turn again.
A young man's heart, by Heaven's bless-
ing, is 180

A wide world, where a thousand new-born
hopes

Empurple fresh the melancholy blood:
But an old man's is narrow, tenantless
Of hopes, and stuff'd with many memories,
Which, being pleasant, ease the heavy
pulse—

Painful, clog up and stagnate. Weigh this
matter

Even as a miser balances his coin;
And, in the name of mercy, give command
That your knight Albert be brought here
before you. 189

He will expound this riddle; he will show
A noon-day proof of bad Auranthe's guilt.

Otho. Let Albert straight be summon'd.
[*Exit one of the Nobles.*]

Ludolph. Impossible!
I cannot doubt—I will not—no—to
doubt

Is to be ashes!—wither'd up to death!

Otho. My gentle Ludolph, harbour not a
fear;

You do yourself much wrong.

Ludolph. O, wretched dolt!
Now, when my foot is almost on thy neck,
Wilt thou infuriate me? Proof! Thou fool!
Why wilt thou tease impossibility 199
With such a thick-skull'd persevering suit?
Fanatic obstinacy! Prodigy!

Monster of folly! Ghost of a turn'd
brain!

You puzzle me,—you haunt me,—when I
dream

Of you my brain will split! Bold sor-
cerer!

Juggler! May I come near you? On my
soul

I know not whether to pity, curse, or
laugh.

Enter ALBERT, and the Nobleman.

Here, Albert, this old phantom wants a
proof!

Give him his proof! A camel's load of
proofs!

Otho. Albert, I speak to you as a man
Whose words once utter'd pass like current
gold; 210

And therefore fit to calmly put a close
To this brief tempest. Do you stand pos-
sess'd

Of any proof against the honourableness
Of Lady Auranthe, our new-spons'd daugh-
ter?

Albert. You chill me with astonishment.
How's this?

My liege, what proof should I have 'gainst
a fame

Impossible of slur ?

[*OTHO rises.*

Erminia. O wickedness !

Ethelbert. Deluded monarch, 't is a cruel
lie. 218

Otho. Peace, rebel-priest !

Conrad. Insult beyond credence !

Erminia. Almost a dream !

Ludolph. We have awaked from !

A foolish dream that from my brow hath
wrung

A wrathful dew. O folly ! why did I

So act the lion with this silly gnat ?

Let them depart. Lady *Erminia* !

I ever grieved for you, as who did not ?

But now you have, with such a brazen
front,

So most maliciously, so madly striven

To dazzle the soft moon, when tenderest
clouds

Should be unloop'd around to curtain her ;

I leave you to the desert of the world 230

Almost with pleasure. Let them be set
free

For me ! I take no personal revenge

More than against a nightmare, which a
man

Forgets in the new dawn. [*Exit LUDOLPH.*

Otho. Still in extremes ! No, they must
not be loose.

Ethelbert. Albert, I must suspect thee of
a crime

So fiendish —

Otho. Fear'st thou not my fury, monk ?

Conrad, be they in your safe custody

Till we determine some fit punishment. 240

It is so mad a deed, I must reflect

And question them in private ; for per-
haps,

By patient scrutiny, we may discover

Whether they merit death, or should be
placed

In care of the physicians.

[*Exeunt OTHO and Nobles, ALBERT*
following.

Conrad. My guards, ho !

Erminia. Albert, wilt thou follow there ?

Wilt thou creep dastardly behind his back,
And shrink away from a weak woman's
eye ?

Turn, thou court - Janus ! thou forgett'st
thyself ;

Here is the duke, waiting with open
arms,

Enter Guards.

To thank thee ; here congratulate each
other ; 250

Wring hands ; embrace ; and swear how
lucky 't was

That I, by happy chance, hit the right
man

Of all the world to trust in.

Albert. Trust ! to me !

Conrad (aside). He is the sole one in this
mystery.

Erminia. Well, I give up, and save my
prayers for Heaven !

You, who could do this deed, would ne'er
relent,

Though, at my words, the hollow prison-
vaults

Would groan for pity.

Conrad. Manacle them both !

Ethelbert. I know it — it must be — I
see it all ! 259

Albert, thou art the minion !

Erminia. Ah ! too plain —

Conrad. Silence ! Gag up their mouths !
I cannot bear

More of this brawling. That the Emperor
Had placed you in some other custody !

Bring them away.

[*Exeunt all but ALBERT.*

Albert. Though my name perish from
the book of honour,

Almost before the recent ink is dry,

And be no more remember'd after death,

Than any drummer's in the muster-roll ;

Yet shall I season high my sudden fall 269

With triumph o'er that evil-witted duke !

He shall feel what it is to have the hand

Of a man drowning, on his hateful throat.

Enter GERSA and SIGIFRED.

Gersa. What discord is at ferment in this house ?

Sigifred. We are without conjecture; not a soul

We met could answer any certainty.

Gersa. Young Ludolph, like a fiery arrow, shot

By us.

Sigifred. The Emperor, with cross'd arms, in thought.

Gersa. In one room music, in another sadness,

Perplexity every where !

Albert. A trifle more !

Follow ; your presences will much avail ²⁸⁰

To tune our jarred spirits. I'll explain.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I.—AURANTHE'S *Apartment*

AURANTHE and CONRAD discovered.

Conrad. Well, well, I know what ugly jeopardy

We are caged in; you need not pester that Into my ears. Pr'ythee, let me be spared A foolish tongue, that I may bethink me Of remedies with some deliberation.

You cannot doubt but 'tis in Albert's power

To crush or save us ?

Auranthe. No, I cannot doubt.

He has, assure yourself, by some strange means,

My secret; which I ever hid from him, ⁹ Knowing his mawkish honesty.

Conrad. Cursed slave !

Auranthe. Ay, I could almost curse him now myself.

Wretched impediment ! Evil genius ! A glue upon my wings, that cannot spread, When they should span the provinces ! A snake,

A scorpion, sprawling on the first gold step,

Conducting to the throne, high canopied.

Conrad. You would not hear my counsel, when his life

Might have been trodden out, all sure and hush'd;

Now the dull animal forsooth must be

Intreated, managed ! When can you contrive ²⁰

The interview he demands ?

Auranthe. As speedily

It must be done as my bribed woman can

Unseen conduct him to me; but I fear

'T will be impossible, while the broad day

Comes through the panes with persecuting glare.

Methinks, if 't now were night I could intrigue

With darkness, bring the stars to second me, And settle all this trouble.

Conrad. Nonsense ! Child !

See him immediately; why not now ?

Auranthe. Do you forget that even the senseless door-posts ³⁰

Are on the watch and gape through all the house ?

How many whisperers there are about,

Hungry for evidence to ruin me:

Men I have spurn'd, and women I have taunted ?

Besides, the foolish prince sends, minute whiles,

His pages—so they tell me—to inquire

After my health, intreating, if I please,

To see me.

Conrad. Well, suppose this Albert here;

What is your power with him ?

Auranthe. He should be

My echo, my taught parrot ! but I fear ⁴⁰

He will be cur enough to bark at me;

Have his own say; read me some silly creed

'Bout shame and pity.

Conrad. What will you do then ?

Auranthe. What I shall do, I know not; what I would

Cannot be done; for see, this chamber-floor

Will not yield to the pick-axe and the spade,—

Here is no quiet depth of hollow ground.

Conrad. Sister, you have grown sensible
and wise,

Seconding, ere I speak it, what is now, 49
I hope, resolved between us.

Auranthe. Say, what is 't ?

Conrad. You need not be his sexton too;
a man

May carry that with him shall make him
die

Elsewhere, — give that to him; pretend
the while

You will to-morrow succumb to his wishes,
Be what they may, and send him from the
Castle

On some fool's errand: let his latest groan
Frighten the wolves !

Auranthe. Alas ! he must not die !

Conrad. Would you were both hearsed
up in stifling lead !

Detested —

Auranthe. Conrad, hold ! I would not
bear 59

The little thunder of your fretful tongue,
Tho' I alone were taken in these toils,
And you could free me; but remember,
sir,

You live alone in my security:

So keep your wits at work, for your own
sake,

Not mine, and be more mannerly.

Conrad. Thou wasp !

If my domains were emptied of these folk,
And I had thee to starve —

Auranthe. O, marvellous !

But Conrad, now be gone; the Host is
look'd for;

Cringe to the Emperor, entertain the Lords,
And, do ye mind, above all things, pro-
claim 70

My sickness, with a brother's sadden'd eye,
Condoling with Prince Ludolph. In fit
time

Return to me.

Conrad. I leave you to your thoughts.

[*Exit.*

Auranthe (sola). Down, down, proud
temper ! down, Auranthe's pride !

Why do I anger him when I should kneel ?

*Conrad ! Albert ! help ! help ! What can
I do ?*

O wretched woman ! lost, wreck'd, swal-
low'd up,

Accursed, blasted ! O, thou golden Crown,
Orbing along the serene firmament 79

Of a wide empire, like a glowing moon;
And thou, bright sceptre ! lustrous in my
eyes, —

There — as the fabled fair Hesperian tree,
Bearing a fruit more precious ! graceful
thing,

Delicate, godlike, magic ! must I leave
Thee to melt in the visionary air,

Ere, by one grasp, this common hand is
made

Imperial ? I do not know the time

When I have wept for sorrow; but me-
thinks 83

I could now sit upon the ground, and shed
Tears, tears of misery ! O, the heavy day !

How shall I bear my life till Albert comes ?
Ludolph ! Erminia ! Proofs ! O heavy
day !

Bring me some mourning weeds, that I
may 'tire

Myself, as fits one wailing her own death:
Cut off these curls, and brand this lily
hand,

And throw these jewels from my loathing
sight, —

Fetch me a missal, and a string of beads, —
A cup of bitter'd water, and a crust, —

I will confess, O holy Abbot ! — How ! 99

What is this ? Auranthe ! thou fool, dolt,
Whimpering idiot ! up ! up ! and quell !

I am safe ! Coward ! why am I in fear ?
Albert ! he cannot stickle, chew the cud

In such a fine extreme, — impossible !
Who knocks ?

[*Goes to the door, listens, and opens it.*

Enter ALBERT.

Albert, I have been waiting for you here
With such an aching heart, such swooning
throbs

On my poor brain, such cruel — cruel sor-
row,

That I should claim your pity! Art not well?
109

Albert. Yes, lady, well.

Auranthe. You look not so, alas!
But pale, as if you brought some heavy news.

Albert. You know full well what makes me look so pale.

Auranthe. No! Do I? Surely I am still to learn

Some horror; all I know, this present, is I am near hustled to a dangerous gulf, Which you can save me from, — and therefore safe,

So trusting in thy love; that should not make

Thee pale, my *Albert.*

Albert. It doth make me freeze.

Auranthe. Why should it, love?

Albert. You should not ask me that,
But make your own heart monitor, and save Me the great pain of telling. You must know.
121

Auranthe. Something has vext you, *Albert.* There are times

When simplest things put on a sombre cast;

A melancholy mood will haunt a man,
Until most easy matters take the shape Of unachievable tasks; small rivulets Then seem impassable.

Albert. Do not cheat yourself
With hope that gloss of words, or suppliant action,

Or tears, or ravings, or self-threaten'd death,
129

Can alter my resolve.

Auranthe. You make me tremble;
Not so much at your threats, as at your voice,

Untuned, and harsh, and barren of all love.

Albert. You suffocate me! Stop this devil's parley,

And listen to me; know me once for all.

Auranthe. I thought I did. Alas! I am deceived.

Albert. No, you are not deceived. You took me for

A man detesting all inhuman crime;
And therefore kept from me your demon's plot

Against Erminia. Silent? Be so still;
For ever! Speak no more; but hear my words,
140

Thy fate. Your safety I have bought to-day

By blazoning a lie, which in the dawn I'll expiate with truth.

Auranthe. O cruel traitor!

Albert. For I would not set eyes upon thy shame;

I would not see thee dragg'd to death by the hair,

Penanced, and taunted on a scaffolding!
To-night, upon the skirts of the blind wood That blackens northward of these horrid towers,

I wait for you with horses. Choose your fate.
149

Farewell!

Auranthe. *Albert,* you jest; I'm sure you must.

You, an ambitious Soldier! I, a Queen,
One who could say, — here, rule these Provinces!

Take tribute from those cities for thyself!
Empty these armouries, these treasuries,
Must'ring thy warlike thousands at a nod!
Go! Conquer Italy!

Albert. *Auranthe,* you have made
The whole world chaff to me. Your doom is fix'd.

Auranthe. Out, villain! dastard!

Albert. Look there to the door!

Who is it?

Auranthe. Conrad, traitor!

Albert. Let him in.

Enter CONRAD.

Do not affect amazement, hypocrite,
160
At seeing me in this chamber.

Conrad. *Auranthe?*

Albert. Talk not with eyes, but speak your curses out

Against me, who would sooner crush and grind

A brace of toads, than league with them
t' oppress

An innocent lady, gull an Emperor,
More generous to me than autumn sun
To ripening harvests.

Auranthe. No more insult, sir !

Albert. Ay, clutch your scabbard; but,
for prudence sake,

Draw not the sword; 't would make an up-
roar, Duke,

You would not hear the end of. At night-
fall 170

Your lady sister, if I guess aright,
Will leave this busy castle. You had best
Take farewell too of worldly vanities.

Conrad. Vassal !

Albert. To-morrow, when the Emperor
sends

For loving Conrad, see you fawn on him.
Good even !

Auranthe. You 'll be seen !

Albert. See the coast clear then.

Auranthe (as he goes). Remorseless Al-
bert ! Cruel, cruel wretch !

[*She lets him out.*]

Conrad. So, we must lick the dust ?

Auranthe. I follow him.

Conrad. How ? Where ? The plan of
your escape ?

Auranthe. He waits

For me with horses by the forest-side, 180
Northward.

Conrad. Good, good ! he dies. You go,
say you ?

Auranthe. Perforce.

Conrad. Be speedy, darkness ! Till that
comes,

Fiends keep you company ! [*Exit.*]

Auranthe. And you ! And you !

And all men ! Vanish !

[*Retires to an inner apartment.*]

SCENE II. — *An Apartment in the Castle*

Enter LUDOLPH and a Page.

Page. Still very sick, my lord; but now
I went,

Knowing my duty to so good a Prince;

And there her women, in a mournful throng,
Stood in the passage whispering; if any
Moved, 't was with careful steps, and hush'd
as death:

They bade me stop.

Ludolph. Good fellow, once again

Make soft inquiry; pr'ythee, be not stay'd
By any hindrance, but with gentlest force
Break through her weeping servants, till
thou com'st

E'en to her chamber door, and there, fair
boy —

If with thy mother's milk thou hast suck'd
in

Any divine eloquence — woo her ears

With plaints for me, more tender than the
voice

Of dying Echo, echoed.

Page. Kindest master !

To know thee sad thus, will unloose my
tongue

In mournful syllables. Let but my words
reach

Her ears, and she shall take them coupled
with

Moans from my heart, and sighs not coun-
terfeit.

May I speed better ! [*Exit Page*]

Ludolph (solus). *Auranthe !* My Life

Long have I loved thee, yet till now no
loved:

Remembering, as I do, hard-hearted time
When I had heard e'en of thy death per-
haps,

And thoughtless, suffer'd thee to pass along
Into Elysium ! — now I follow thee
A substance or a shadow, wheresoe'er

Thou leadest me, — whether thy white feet
press,

With pleasant weight, the amorous-aching
earth,

Or thro' the air thou pioneerest me,

A shade ! Yet sadly I predestinate !

O unbenignest Love, why wilt thou let

Darkness steal out upon the sleepy world

So wearily; as if night's chariot-wheels

Were clogg'd in some thick cloud ? O
cheatful Love,

et not her steeds with drowsy-footed pace
 ass the high stars, before sweet embas-
 sage
 comes from the pillow'd beauty of that
 fair
 completion of all delicate Nature's wit !
 out her faint lips anew with rubious
 health;
 and, with thine infant fingers, lift the
 fringe
 of her sick eyelids; that those eyes may
 glow 40
 With wooing light upon me, ere the Morn
 eers with disrelish, gray, barren, and
 cold !

Enter GERSA and Courtiers.

tho calls me his Lion — should I blush
 o be so tamed ? so —

Gersa. Do me the courtesy,
 entlemen, to pass on.

1st Knight. We are your servants.
 [*Exeunt Courtiers.*]

Ludolph. It seems then, Sir, you have
 found out the man
 ou would confer with; — me ?

Gersa. If I break not
 oo much upon your thoughtful mood, I
 will
 claim a brief while your patience.

Ludolph. For what cause
 oe'er, I shall be honour'd.

Gersa. I not less.

Ludolph. What may it be ? No trifle
 can take place 51

f such deliberate prologue, serious 'hav-
 iour.

ut, be it what it may, I cannot fail
 o listen with no common interest;
 or though so new your presence is to
 me,

have a soldier's friendship for your fame.
 lease you explain.

Gersa. As thus: — for, pardon me,
 cannot in plain terms grossly assault
 noble nature; and would faintly sketch
 What your quick apprehension will fill up;
 o finely I esteem you.

Ludolph. I attend. 61

Gersa. Your generous father, most illus-
 trious Otho,

Sits in the banquet-room among his chiefs;
 His wine is bitter, for you are not there;
 His eyes are fix'd still on the open doors,
 And ev'ry passer in he frowns upon,
 Seeing no Ludolph comes.

Ludolph. I do neglect —

Gersa. And for your absence may I guess
 the cause ?

Ludolph. Stay there ! No — guess ?
 More princely you must be 69
 Than to make guesses at me. 'Tis enough.
 I'm sorry I can hear no more.

Gersa. And I
 As grieved to force it on you so abrupt;
 Yet, one day, you must know a grief, whose
 sting

Will sharpen more the longer 'tis con-
 ceal'd.

Ludolph. Say it at once, sir ! dead —
 dead — is she dead ?

Gersa. Mine is a cruel task: she is not
 dead,
 And would, for your sake, she were inno-
 cent —

Ludolph. Thou liest ! Thou amazest me
 beyond

All scope of thought, convulsest my heart's
 blood 79

To deadly churning ! *Gersa*, you are young,
 As I am; let me observe you, face to face:
 Not gray-brow'd like the poisonous Ethel-
 bert,

No rheumed eyes, no furrowing of age,
 No wrinkles, where all vices nestle in
 Like crannied vermin — no ! but fresh and
 young,

And hopeful featured. Ha ! by Heaven
 you weep

Tears, human tears ! Do you repent you
 then

Of a cursed torturer's office ? Why shouldst
 join —

Tell me, the league of devils ? Confess —
 confess —

The Lie !

Gersa. Lie! — but begone all ceremonious points 90

Of honour battailous! I could not turn
My wrath against thee for the orb'd world.

Ludolph. Your wrath, weak boy? Tremble at mine, unless

Retraction follow close upon the heels
Of that late stounding insult! Why has my sword

Not done already a sheer judgment on thee?

Despair, or eat thy words! Why, thou wast nigh

Whimpering away my reason! Hark ye, Sir,

It is no secret, that Erminia,
Erminia, Sir, was hidden in your tent; 100
O bless'd asylum! Comfortable home!
Begone! I pity thee; thou art a gull,
Erminia's last new puppet!

Gersa. Furious fire!
Thou mak'st me boil as hot as thou canst flame!

And in thy teeth I give thee back the lie!
Thou liest! Thou, Auranthe's fool! A wittol —

Ludolph. Look! look at this bright sword:

There is no part of it, to the very hilt,
But shall indulge itself about thine heart!
Draw! but remember thou must cower thy plumes, 110

As yesterday the Arab made thee stoop —

Gersa. Patience! Not here; I would not spill thy blood

Here, underneath this roof where Otho breathes, —

Thy father, — almost mine.

Ludolph. O faltering coward!

Re-enter PAGE.

Stay, stay; here is one I have half a word with.

Well — What ails thee, child?

Page. My lord!

Ludolph. Good fellow!

Page. They are fled!

Ludolph. They! Who?

Page.

When anxiously
I hasten'd back, your grieving messenger,
I found the stairs all dark, the lamps extinct,

And not a foot or whisper to be heard. 120

I thought her dead, and on the lowest step

Sat listening; when presently came by

Two muffled up, — one sighing heavily,

The other cursing low, whose voice I knew

For the Duke Conrad's. Close I follow'd them

Thro' the dark ways they chose to the open air;

And, as I follow'd, heard my lady speak.

Ludolph. Thy life answers the truth!

Page. The chamber's empty!

Ludolph. As I will be of mercy! So, at last, 125

This nail is in my temples!

Gersa. Be calm in this

Ludolph. I am.

Gersa. And Albert too has disappear'd

Ere I met you, I sought him every where;

You would not hearken.

Ludolph. Which way went they, boy?

Gersa. I'll hunt with you.

Ludolph. No, no, no. My senses are still whole. I have survived. My arm is strong —

My appetite sharp — for revenge! I'll no sharer

In my feast; my injury is all my own,

And so is my revenge, my lawful chatels!

Terrier, ferret them out! Burn — burn the witch!

Trace me their footsteps! Away! 130

[Exeunt]

ACT V

SCENE I. — *A part of the Forest*

Enter CONRAD and AURANTHE.

Auranthe. Go no further; not a step more. Thou art

A master-plague in the midst of miseries.

Go, — I fear thee! I tremble every limb

Who never shook before. There's moody death

In thy resolved looks! Yes, I could kneel
To pray thee far away! Conrad, go!
go! —

There! yonder underneath the boughs I see
Our horses!

Conrad. Ay, and the man.

Auranthe. Yes, he is there.

Go, go, — no blood! no blood! — go, gentle Conrad!

Conrad. Farewell!

Auranthe. Farewell! For this Heaven
pardon you! 10

[Exit AURANTHE.]

Conrad. If he survive one hour, then
may I die

In unimagined tortures, or breathe through
A long life in the foulest sink o' the world!
He dies! 'Tis well she do not advertise
The caitiff of the cold steel at his back.

[Exit CONRAD.]

Enter LUDOLPH and Page.

Ludolph. Miss'd the way, boy? Say not
that on your peril!

Page. Indeed, indeed I cannot trace
them further.

Ludolph. Must I stop here? Here solitary die?

Stifed beneath the thick oppressive shade
Of these dull boughs, — this oven of dark
thickets, — 20

Silent, — without revenge? — pshaw! —
bitter end, —

A bitter death, — a suffocating death, —
A gnawing — silent — deadly, quiet death!
Escaped? — fled? — vanish'd? melted into
air?

She's gone! I cannot clutch her! no revenge!

A muffled death, ensnared in horrid silence!
Suck'd to my grave amid a dreamy calm!
O, where is that illustrious noise of war,
To smother up this sound of labouring
breath, 29

This rustle of the trees!

[AURANTHE shrieks at a distance.]

Page.

My lord, a noise!

This way — hark!

Ludolph. Yes, yes! A hope! A music!
A glorious clamour! How I live again!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE II. — Another part of the Forest

Enter ALBERT (wounded).

Albert. O! for enough life to support me

or

To Otho's feet!

Enter LUDOLPH.

Ludolph. Thrice villanous, stay there!
Tell me where that detested woman is,
Or this is through thee!

Albert. My good Prince, with me
The sword has done its worst; not without
worst

Done to another, — Conrad has it home —
I see you know it all —

Ludolph. Where is his sister?

Enter AURANTHE.

Auranthe. Albert!

Ludolph. Ha! There! there! — He is
the paramour! —

There — hug him — dying! O, thou innocence,

Shrine him and comfort him at his last
gasp, 30

Kiss down his eyelids! Was he not thy
love?

Wilt thou forsake him at his latest hour?
Keep fearful and aloof from his last gaze,
His most uneasy moments, when cold death
Stands with the door ajar to let him in?

Albert. O that that door with hollow slam
would close

Upon me sudden, for I cannot meet,
In all the unknown chambers of the dead,
Such horrors —

Ludolph. Auranthe! what can he mean?
What horrors? Is it not a joyous time?
Am I not married to a paragon 31
'Of personal beauty and untainted soul?'
A blushing fair-eyed purity? A sylph,

Whose snowy timid hand has never sinn'd
Beyond a flower pluck'd, white as itself ?
Albert, you do insult my bride — your mis-
tress —

To talk of horrors on our wedding-night !

Albert. Alas ! poor Prince, I would you
knew my heart !

'T is not so guilty —

Ludolph. Hear, he pleads not guilty !
You are not ? or, if so, what matters it ?
You have escaped me, free as the dusk
air, 31

Hid in the forest, safe from my revenge ;
I cannot catch you ! You should laugh at
me,

Poor cheated Ludolph ! Make the forest
hiss

With jeers at me ! You tremble ; faint at
once,

You will come to again. O cockatrice,
I have you ! Whither wander those fair
eyes

To entice the Devil to your help, that he
May change you to a spider, so to crawl
Into some cranny to escape my wrath ? 40

Albert. Sometimes the counsel of a dy-
ing man

Doth operate quietly when his breath is
gone :

Disjoin those hands — part — part — do
not destroy

Each other — forget her ! — Our miseries
Are equal shared, and mercy is —

Ludolph. A boon

When one can compass it. Auranthe, try
Your oratory ; your breath is not so hitch'd.
Ay, stare for help !

[ALBERT groans and dies.

There goes a spotted soul

Howling in vain along the hollow night !

Hear him ! He calls you — sweet Auran-
the, come ! 50

Auranthe. Kill me !

Ludolph. No ! What, upon our mar-
riage-night !

The earth would shudder at so foul a deed !
A fair bride ! A sweet bride ! An inno-
cent bride !

No ! we must revel it, as 't is in use
In times of delicate brilliant ceremony :
Come, let me lead you to our halls again !
Nay, linger not ; make no resistance,
sweet ; —

Will you ? Ah, wretch, thou canst not, for
I have

The strength of twenty lions 'gainst a
lamb !

Now — one adieu for Albert ! — Come
away ! 60

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *An inner Court of the Castle*

*Enter SIGIFREL, GONFRED, and THEODORE,
meeting.*

1st Knight. Was ever such a night ?

Sigifred. What horrors more ?

Things unbeliev'd one hour, so strange
they are,

The next hour stamps with credit.

1st Knight. Your last news ?

Gonfred. After the Page's story of the
death

Of Albert and Duke Conrad ?

Sigifred. And the return

Of Ludolph with the Princess.

Gonfred. No more, save

Prince Gersa's freeing Abbot Ethelbert,

And the sweet lady, fair Erminia,

From prison.

1st Knight. Where are they now ? Hast
yet heard ?

Gonfred. With the sad Emperor they
are closeted ; 10

I saw the three pass slowly up the stairs,
The lady weeping, the old Abbot cowl'd.

Sigifred. What next ?

1st Knight. I ache to think on 't.

Gonfred. 'T is with fate.

1st Knight. One while these proud towers
are hush'd as death.

Gonfred. The next our poor Prince fills
the arched rooms

With ghastly ravings.

Sigifred. I do fear his brain.

Gonfred. I will see more. Bear you so stout a heart?

[*Exeunt into the Castle.*]

SCENE IV. — *A Cabinet, opening towards a terrace*

OTHO, ERMINIA, ETHELBERT, and a Physician, discovered.

Otho. O, my poor boy! My son! My son! My Ludolph!

Have ye no comfort for me, ye physicians Of the weak body and soul?

Ethelbert. 'Tis not in medicine, Either of heaven or earth, to cure, unless Fit time be chosen to administer.

Otho. A kind forbearance, holy Abbot. Come,

Erminia; here, sit by me, gentle girl; Give me thy hand; hast thou forgiven me?

Erminia. Would I were with the saints to pray for you!

Otho. Why will ye keep me from my darling child? 10

Physician. Forgive me, but he must not see thy face.

Otho. Is then a father's countenance a Gorgon?

Hath it not comfort in it? Would it not Console my poor boy, cheer him, help his spirits?

Let me embrace him; let me speak to him; I will! Who hinders me? Who's Emperor?

Physician. You may not, Sire; 't would overwhelm him quite,

He is so full of grief and passionate wrath; Too heavy a sigh would kill him, or do worse.

He must be saved by fine contrivances; 20 And, most especially, we must keep clear Out of his sight a father whom he loves; His heart is full, it can contain no more, And do its ruddy office.

Ethelbert. Sage advice; We must endeavour how to ease and slacken The tight-wound energies of his despair, Not make them tenser.

Otho. Enough! I hear, I hear; Yet you were about to advise more,—I listen.

Ethelbert. This learned doctor will agree with me, That not in the smallest point should he be thwarted, 30

Or gainsaid by one word; his very motions,

Nods, becks, and hints, should be obey'd with care,

Even on the moment; so his troubled mind May cure itself.

Physician. There are no other means.

Otho. Open the door; let's hear if all is quiet.

Physician. Beseech you, Sire, forbear.

Erminia. Do, do.

Otho. I command!

Open it straight; — hush! — quiet! — my lost boy!

My miserable child!

Ludolph (indistinctly without). Fill, fill my goblet, — here's a health!

Erminia. O, close the door!

Otho. Let, let me hear his voice; this cannot last: 39

And fain would I catch up his dying words, Though my own knell they be! This cannot last!

O let me catch his voice — for lo! I hear This silence whisper me that he is dead! It is so! Gersa?

Enter GERSA.

Physician. Say, how fares the prince?

Gersa. More calm; his features are less wild and flush'd;

Once he complain'd of weariness.

Physician. Indeed! 'Tis good, — 'tis good; let him but fall asleep,

That saves him.

Otho. Gersa, watch him like a child; Ward him from harm, — and bring me better news!

Physician. Humour him to the height. I fear to go; 50

For should he catch a glimpse of my dull
garb,
It might affright him, fill him with suspi-
cion

That we believe him sick, which must not
be.

Gersa. I will invent what soothing means
I can.

[*Exit GERSA.*]

Physician. This should cheer up your
Highness; weariness

Is a good symptom, and most favourable;
It gives me pleasant hopes. Please you,
walk forth

Upon the terrace; the refreshing air
Will blow one half of your sad doubts
away. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. — *A Banqueting Hall, bril-
liantly illuminated, and set forth with
all costly magnificence, with supper-
tables laden with services of gold and
silver. A door in the back scene, guarded
by two Soldiers. Lords, Ladies, Knights,
Gentlemen, etc., whispering sadly, and
ranging themselves; part entering and
part discovered.*

1st Knight. Grievously are we tantalized,
one and all;

Sway'd here and there, commanded to and
fro,

As though we were the shadows of a sleep,
And link'd to a dreaming fancy. What do
we here?

Gonfred. I am no seer; you know we
must obey

The prince from A to Z, though it should
be

To set the place in flames. I pray, hast
heard

Where the most wicked Princess is?

1st Knight. There, sir,

In the next room; have you remark'd those
two

Stout soldiers posted at the door?

Gonfred. For what?

[*They whisper.*]

1st Lady. How ghast a train!

2d Lady. Sure this should be some splen-
did burial.

1st Lady. What fearful whispering! See,
see, — *Gersa* there!

Enter GERSA.

Gersa. Put on your brightest looks;
smile if you can;

Behave as all were happy; keep your eyes
From the least watch upon him; if he
speaks

To any one, answer collectedly,
Without surprise, his questions, howe'er
strange.

Do this to the utmost — though, alas! with
me

The remedy grows hopeless! Here he
comes, —

Observe what I have said — show no sur-
prise.

*Enter LUDOLPH, followed by SIGIFRED and
Page.*

Ludolph. A splendid company! rare
beauties here!

I should have Orphean lips, and Plato's
fancy,

Amphion's utterance, toned with his lyre,
Or the deep key of Jove's sonorous mouth,
To give fit salutation. Methought I heard,
As I came in, some whispers — what of
that?

'Tis natural men should whisper; at the
kiss

Of Psyche given by Love, there was a
buzz

Among the gods! — and silence is as natu-
ral.

These draperies are fine, and, being a
mortal,

I should desire no better; yet, in truth,
There must be some superior costliness,
Some wider-domed high magnificence!

I would have, as a mortal I may not,
Hangings of heaven's clouds, purple and
gold,

Slung from the spheres; gauzes of silver
mist,

Loop'd up with cords of twisted wreathed
light,

And tassell'd round with weeping meteors !
These pendent lamps and chandeliers are
bright 40

As earthly fires from dull dross can be
cleansed ;

Yet could my eyes drink up intenser beams
Undazzled — this is darkness — when I
close

These lids, I see far fiercer brilliances, —
Skies full of splendid moons, and shooting
stars,

And spouting exhalations, diamond fires,
And panting fountains quivering with deep
glows !

Yes — this is dark — is it not dark ?

Sigifred. My Lord,
'Tis late; the lights of festival are ever 49
Quench'd in the morn.

Ludolph. 'Tis not to-morrow then ?

Sigifred. 'Tis early dawn.

Gersa. Indeed full time we slept ;

Say you so, Prince ?

Ludolph. I say I quarrel'd with you ;
We did not tilt each other — that's a
blessing, —

Good gods ! no innocent blood upon my
head !

Sigifred. Retire, *Gersa* !

Ludolph. There should be three more
here :

For two of them, they stay away perhaps,
Being gloomy-minded, haters of fair rev-
els, —

They know their own thoughts best.

As for the third,
Deep blue eyes, semi-shaded in white lids,
Finish'd with lashes fine for more soft
shade, 60

Completed by her twin-arch'd ebon-brows ;
White temples, of exactest elegance,
Of even mould, felicitous and smooth ;
Cheeks fashion'd tenderly on either side,
So perfect, so divine, that our poor eyes
Are dazzled with the sweet proportioning,
And wonder that 'tis so — the magic
chance !

Her nostrils, small, fragrant, fairy-delicate ;
Her lips — I swear no human bones e'er
wore

So taking a disguise ; — you shall behold
her ! 70

We'll have her presently ; ay, you shall see
her,

And wonder at her, friends, she is so fair ;
She is the world's chief jewel, and, by
heaven,

She's mine by right of marriage ! — she is
mine !

Patience, good people, in fit time I send

A summoner, — she will obey my call,

Being a wife most mild and dutiful.

First I would hear what music is prepared
To herald and receive her ; let me hear !

Sigifred. Bid the musicians soothe him
tenderly. 80

[A soft strain of Music.]

Ludolph. Ye have none better ? No, I
am content ;

'Tis a rich sobbing melody, with reliefs

Full and majestic ; it is well enough,

And will be sweeter, when you see her pace

Sweeping into this presence, glistened o'er

With emptied caskets, and her train upheld

By ladies, habited in robes of lawn,

Sprinkled with golden crescents, others
bright

In silks, with spangles shower'd, and bow'd
to 89

By Duchesses and pearled Margravines !

Sad, that the fairest creature of the earth —

I pray you mind me not — 'tis sad, I say,

That the extremest beauty of the world

Should so entrench herself away from me,

Behind a barrier of engender'd guilt !

2d Lady. Ah ! what a moan !

1st Knight. Most piteous indeed !

Ludolph. She shall be brought before this
company,

And then — then —

1st Lady. He muses.

Gersa. O, Fortune, where will this
end ?

Sigifred. I guess his purpose ! Indeed
he must not have

That pestilence brought in,—that cannot
be, 100

There we must stop him.

Gersa. I am lost! Hush, hush!
He is about to rave again.

Ludolph. A barrier of guilt! I was the
fool,

She was the cheater! Who's the cheater
now,

And who the fool? The entrapp'd, the
caged fool,

The bird-limed raven? She shall croak to
death

Secure! Methinks I have her in my fist,
To crush her with my heel! Wait, wait!
I marvel

My father keeps away. Good friend — ah!
Sigifred!

Do bring him to me, — and Erminia 110
I fain would see before I sleep — and Eth-
elbert,

That he may bless me, as I know he will,
Though I have cursed him.

Sigifred. Rather suffer me
To lead you to them.

Ludolph. No, excuse me, — no!
The day is not quite done. Go, bring them
hither. [Exit SIGIFRED.

Certes, a father's smile should, like sun
light,

Slant on my sheafed harvest of ripe bliss.
Besides, I thirst to pledge my lovely bride

In a deep goblet: let me see — what wine?
The strong Iberian juice, or mellow Greek?

Or pale Calabrian? Or the Tuscan grape?
Or of old Ætna's pulpy wine-presses, 122

Black stain'd with the fat vintage, as it
were

The purple slaughter-house, where Bac-
chus' self

Prick'd his own swollen veins? Where is
my page?

Page. Here, here!

Ludolph. Be ready to obey me; anon
thou shalt

Bear a soft message for me; for the hour
Draws near when I must make a winding
up

Of bridal mysteries — a fine-spun ven-
geance!

Carve it on my tomb, that, when I res-
beneath, 13

Men shall confess this Prince was gull'd
and cheated,

But from the ashes of disgrace he rose
More than a fiery phoenix, and did burn

His ignominy up in purging fires!
Did I not send, Sir, but a moment past,

For my Father?

Gersa. You did.

Ludolph. Perhaps 't would be
Much better he came not.

Gersa. He enters now

Enter OTHO, ERMINIA, ETHELBERT, SIG-
FRED, and Physician.

Ludolph. O thou good man, against whos-
sacred head

I was a mad conspirator, chiefly too, 13
For the sake of my fair newly wedded wife

Now to be punish'd, do not look so sad!
Those charitable eyes will thaw my heart,

Those tears will wash away a just resolve,
A verdict ten times sworn! Awake —

awake —

Put on a judge's brow, and use a tongue
Made iron-stern by habit! Thou shalt see

A deed to be applauded, 'scribed in gold!
Join a loud voice to mine, and so denounce

What I alone will execute

Otho.

Dear son,

What is it? By your father's love, I sue
That it be nothing merciless!

Ludolph.

To that demon!

Not so! No! She is in temple-stall 15
Being garnish'd for the sacrifice, and I,

The Priest of Justice, will immolate her
Upon the altar of wrath! She stings me

through! —

Even as the worm doth feed upon the nut,
So she, a scorpion, preys upon my brain!

I feel her gnawing here! Let her bu-
vanish,

Then, father, I will lead your legions forth
Compact in steeld squares, and speared

files,

And bid our trumpets speak a fell rebuke
To nations drows'd in peace!

Otho. To-morrow, son,
Be your word law; forget to-day —

Ludolph. I will
When I have finish'd it! Now, — now,
I'm pight,

Tight-footed for the deed!

Erminia. Alas! Alas!

Ludolph. What angel's voice is that?
Erminia!

Ah! gentlest creature, whose sweet innocence

Was almost murder'd; I am penitent;

Wilt thou forgive me? And thou, holy man,

Good Ethelbert, shall I die in peace with you? 170

Erminia. Die, my lord!

Ludolph. I feel it possible.

Otho. Physician?

Physician. I fear me he is past my skill.

Otho. Not so!

Ludolph. I see it — I see it — I have
been wandering!

Half mad — not right here — I forget my purpose.

Bestir — bestir — Auranthe! Ha! ha! ha!

Youngster! Page! go bid them drag her to me!

Obeys! This shall finish it!

[Draws a dagger.]

Otho. Oh, my son! my son!

Sigifred. This must not be — stop there!

Ludolph. Am I obey'd?

A little talk with her — no harm — haste!
haste!

[Exit Page.]
Set her before me — never fear I can strike.

Several Voices. My Lord! My Lord!

Gersa. Good Prince!

Ludolph. Why do ye trouble me? out
— out — away! 182

There she is! take that! and that! no, no —
That's not well done. — Where is she?

The doors open. Enter Page. Several women are seen grouped about AURANTHE in the inner-room.

Page. Alas! My Lord, my Lord! they
cannot move her!

Her arms are stiff, — her fingers clench'd
and cold!

Ludolph. She's dead!

[Staggers and falls into their arms.]

Ethelbert. Take away the dagger.

Gersa. Softly; so!

Otho. Thank God for that!

Sigifred. It could not harm him now.

Gersa. No! — brief be his anguish!

Ludolph. She's gone! I am content —
Nobles, good night! 190

We are all weary — faint — set ope the
doors —

I will to bed! — To-morrow —

The Curtain falls.

[Dies.]

KING STEPHEN

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT

Lord Houghton, when reprinting this piece in the Aldine edition of 1876, appends the following note from the MSS. of Charles Armitage Brown: 'As soon as Keats had finished *Otho the Great* I pointed out to him a subject for an English historical tragedy in the reign of Stephen, beginning with his defeat by the Empress Maud and ending with the death of his son Eustace. He was struck with the vari-

ety of events and characters which must necessarily be introduced, and I offered to give, as before, their dramatic conduct. "The play must open," I began, "with the field of battle, when Stephen's forces are retreating."—"Stop," he cried, "I have been too long in leading strings; I will do all this myself." He immediately set about it, and wrote two or three scenes.'

ACT I

SCENE I. — *Field of Battle*

Alarum. Enter King STEPHEN, Knights, and Soldiers.

Stephen. If shame can on a soldier's vein-swoll'n front
Spread deeper crimson than the battle's toil,

Blush in your casing helmets! for see, see!
Yonder my chivalry, my pride of war,
Wrench'd with an iron hand from firm array,

Are routed loose about the plashy meads,
Of honour forfeit. O, that my known voice

Could reach your dastard ears, and fright you more!

Fly, cowards, fly! Gloucester is at your backs!

Throw your slack bridles o'er the flurried manes,

Ply well the rowell with faint trembling heels,

Scampering to death at last!

1st Knight. The enemy
Bears his flaunt standard close upon their rear.

2d Knight. Sure of a bloody prey, seeing the fens

Will swamp them girth-deep.

Stephen. Over head and ears.
No matter! 'T is a gallant enemy;
How like a comet he goes streaming on.
But we must plague him in the flank,—
hey, friends?

We are well breathed, — follow!

Enter Earl BALDWIN and Soldiers, as defeated.

Stephen. De Redvers!
What is the monstrous bugbear that can fright

Baldwin?

Baldwin. No scare-crow, but the fortunate star

Of boisterous Chester, whose fell truncheon now

Points level to the goal of victory.

This way he comes, and if you would maintain

Your person unaffronted by vile odds,
Take horse, my Lord.

Stephen. And which way spur for life?
Now I thank Heaven I am in the toils,
That soldiers may bear witness how my arm

Can burst the meshes. Not the eagle more
 Loves to beat up against a tyrannous blast,
 Than I to meet the torrent of my foes. ³¹
 This is a brag, — be 't so, — but if I fall,
 Carve it upon my 'scutcheon'd sepulchre.
 On, fellow soldiers! Earl of Redvers,
 back!
 Not twenty Earls of Chester shall brow-
 beat
 The diadem. *[Exeunt. Alarum.]*

SCENE II. — *Another part of the Field*

*Trumpets sounding a Victory. Enter
 GLOCESTER, Knights, and Forces.*

Glocester. Now may we lift our bruised
 visors up,
 And take the flattering freshness of the
 air,

While the wide din of battle dies away
 Into times past, yet to be echoed sure
 In the silent pages of our chroniclers.

1st Knight. Will Stephen's death be
 mark'd there, my good Lord,
 Or that we gave him lodging in yon towers?

Glocester. Fain would I know the great
 usurper's fate.

Enter two Captains severally.

1st Captain. My Lord!

2d Captain. Most noble Earl!

1st Captain. The King —

2d Captain. The Empress greets —

Glocester. What of the King?

1st Captain. He sole and lone maintains
 A hopeless bustle 'mid our swarming arms,
 And with a nimble savageness attacks, ¹³
 Escapes, makes fiercer onset, then anew
 Eludes death, giving death to most that
 dare

Trespass within the circuit of his sword!
 He must by this have fallen. Baldwin is
 taken;

And for the Duke of Bretagne, like a stag
 He flies, for the Welsh beagles to hunt
 down.

God save the Empress!

Glocester. Now our dreaded Queen:
 What message from her Highness?

2d Captain. Royal Maud
 From the throng'd towers of Lincoln hath
 look'd down, ²²

Like Pallas from the walls of Ilium,
 And seen her enemies havock'd at her feet.
 She greets most noble Glocester from her
 heart,

Entreating him, his captains, and brave
 knights,

To grace a banquet. The high city gates
 Are envious which shall see your triumph
 pass;

The streets are full of music.

Enter 2d Knight.

Glocester. Whence come you?

2d Knight. From Stephen, my good
 Prince, — Stephen! Stephen! ³⁰

Glocester. Why do you make such echo-
 ing of his name?

2d Knight. Because I think, my lord, he
 is no man,

But a fierce demon, 'nointed safe from
 wounds,

And misbaptized with a Christian name.

Glocester. A mighty soldier! — Does he
 still hold out?

2d Knight. He shames our victory. His
 valour still

Keeps elbow-room amid our eager swords,
 And holds our bladed falchions all aloof —
 His gleaming battle-axe being slaughter-
 sick,

Smote on the morion of a Flemish knight,
 Broke short in his hand; upon the which
 he flung ⁴¹

The heft away with such a vengeful force,
 It paunch'd the Earl of Chester's horse,
 who then

Spleen-hearted came in full career at him.

Glocester. Did no one take him at a van-
 tage then?

2d Knight. Three then with tiger leap
 upon him flew,

Whom, with his sword swift-drawn and
 nimbly held,

He stung away again, and stood to breathe,
Smiling. Anon upon him rush'd once more
A throng of foes, and in this renew'd strife,
My sword met his and snapp'd off at the
hilt. 51

Glocester. Come, lead me to this man —
and let us move

In silence, not insulting his sad doom
With clamorous trumpets. To the Em-
press bear

My salutation as befits the time.

[*Exeunt GLOCESTER and Forces.*]

SCENE III. — *The Field of Battle*

Enter STEPHEN unarmed.

Stephen. Another sword! And what if
I could seize

One from Bellona's gleaming armoury,
Or choose the fairest of her sheafed spears!
Where are my enemies? Here, close at
hand,

Here come the testy brood. O, for a
sword!

I'm faint — a biting sword! A noble
sword!

A hedge-stake — or a ponderous stone to
hurl

With brawny vengeance, like the labourer
Cain.

Come on! Farewell my kingdom, and all
hail

Thou superb, plumed, and helmeted re-
nown, 10

All hail — I would not truck this brilliant
day

To rule in Pylos with a Nestor's beard —
Come on!

Enter DE KAIMS and Knights, etc.

De Kaims. Is 't madness or a hunger
after death

That makes thee thus unarm'd throw
taunts at us? —

Yield, Stephen, or my sword's point dips in
The gloomy current of a traitor's heart.

Stephen. Do it, De Kaims, I will not
budge an inch.

De Kaims. Yes, of thy madness thou
shalt take the meed.

Stephen. Darest thou?

De Kaims. How dare, against a man dis-
arm'd?

Stephen. What weapons has the lion but
himself? 20

Come not near me, De Kaims, for by the
price

Of all the glory I have won this day,

Being a king, I will not yield alive

To any but the second man of the realm,
Robert of Glocester.

De Kaims. Thou shalt vail to me.

Stephen. Shall I, when I have sworn
against it, sir?

Thou think'st it brave to take a breathing
king,

That, on a court-day bow'd to haughty
Maud,

The awed presence-chamber may be bold
To whisper, there's the man who took
alive 30

Stephen — me — prisoner. Certes, De
Kaims,

The ambition is a noble one.

De Kaims. 'Tis true,

And, Stephen, I must compass it.

Stephen. No, no,

Do not tempt me to throttle you on the
gorge,

Or with my gauntlet crush your hollow
breast,

Just when your knighthood is grown ripe
and full

For lordship.

A Soldier. Is an honest yeoman's spear

Of no use at a need? Take that.

Stephen. Ah, dastard!

De Kaims. What, you are vulnerable!
my prisoner!

Stephen. No, not yet. I disclaim it, and
demand 40

Death as a sovereign right unto a king

Who 'sdains to yield to any but his peer,

If not in title, yet in noble deeds,

The Earl of Glocester. Stab to the hilt,

De Kaims,

or I will never by mean hands be led
from this so famous field. Do you hear !

Be quick !

trumpets. Enter the Earl of CHESTER and Knights.

SCENE IV. — *A Presence Chamber. Queen MAUD in a Chair of State, the Earls of GLOUCESTER and CHESTER, Lords, Attendants*

Maud. Gloucester, no more: I will behold
that Boulogne:

et him before me. Not for the poor sake
f regal pomp and a vain-glorious hour,
s thou with wary speech, yet near enough,
ast hinted.

Gloicester. Faithful counsel have I given;
f wary, for your Highness' benefit.

Maud. The Heavens forbid that I should
not think so,

or by thy valour have I won this realm,
Which by thy wisdom I will ever keep.

o sage advisers let me ever bend ¹⁰

meek attentive ear, so that they treat
of the wide kingdom's rule and govern-

ment,

Not trenching on our actions personal.

advised, not school'd, I would be; and
henceforth

spoken to in clear, plain, and open terms,
Not side-ways sermon'd at.

Gloicester. Then in plain terms,
Once more for the fallen king —

Maud. Your pardon, Brother,
I would no more of that; for, as I said,

It is not for worldly pomp I wish to see
The rebel, but as dooming judge to give ²⁰

A sentence something worthy of his guilt.

Gloicester. If 't must be so, I 'll bring him
to your presence.

[*Exit GLOUCESTER.*

Maud. A meaner summoner might do as
well —

My Lord of Chester, is 't true what I
hear

Of Stephen of Boulogne, our prisoner,

That he, as a fit penance for his crimes,

Eats wholesome, sweet, and palatable food
Off Gloucester's golden dishes — drinks pure
wine,

Lodges soft ?

Chester. More than that, my gracious
Queen,

Has anger'd me. The noble Earl, me-
thinks, ³⁰

Full soldier as he is, and without peer

In counsel, dreams too much among his
books.

It may read well, but sure 't is out of date
To play the Alexander with Darius.

Maud. Truth ! I think so. By Heavens
it shall not last !

Chester. It would amaze your Highness
now to mark

How Gloucester overstrains his courtesy

To that crime-loving rebel, that Boulogne —

Maud. That ingrate !

Chester. For whose vast ingratitude

To our late sovereign lord, your noble sire,
The generous Earl condoles in his mishaps,

And with a sort of lackeying friendliness,
Talks off the mighty frowning from his

brow, ⁴³

Woos him to hold a duet in a smile,

Or, if it please him, play an hour at chess —

Maud. A perjured slave !

Chester. And for his perjury,
Gloucester has fit rewards — nay, I believe,
He sets his bustling household's wits at
work

For flatteries to ease this Stephen's hours,
And make a heaven of his purgatory; ⁵⁰
Adorning bondage with the pleasant gloss
Of feasts and music, and all idle shows
Of indoor pageantry; while syren whippers,
Predestined for his ear, 'scape as half-
check'd

From lips the courtliest and the rubiest,
Of all the realm, admiring of his deeds.

Maud. A frost upon his summer !

Chester. A queen's nod
Can make his June December. Here he
comes.

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THE EVE OF ST. MARK

A FRAGMENT

In a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, dated February 14, 1819, Keats says that he means to send them in the next packet 'The Pot of Basil,' 'St. Agnes' Eve,' and 'if I should have finished it a little thing called "The Eve of St. Mark."' He does not refer to the poem again directly, until writing from Winchester to the same, September 20, when he says: 'The great beauty of poetry is that it makes everything in every place interesting. The palatine Vienna and the abbottine Winchester are equally interesting. Some time since I began a poem called "The Eve of St. Mark," quite in the spirit of town quietude. I think I will give you the sensation of walking about an old country town in a coolish evening. I know not whether I shall ever finish it. I will give it as far as I have gone.' The poem appears never to have been finished, and was published in this fragmentary form in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*.

Mr. Forman gives an interesting extract from

UPON a Sabbath-day it fell;
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell,
That call'd the folk to evening prayer;
The city streets were clean and fair
From wholesome drench of April rains;
And, on the western window panes,
The chilly sunset faintly told
Of unmatured green valleys cold,
Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge, 10
Of primroses by shelter'd rills,
And daisies on the aguish hills.
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell:
The silent streets were crowded well
With staid and pious companies,
Warm from their fireside orat'ries;
And moving, with demurest air,
To even-song, and vesper prayer.

a letter written him by Mr. Rossetti, which throws a possible light on the origin of the poem. He had been reading Keats's letters to Fanny Brawne, and writes: 'I should think it very conceivable — nay, I will say to myself highly probable and almost certain, — that the "Poem which I have in my head" referred to by Keats at page 106 was none other than the fragmentary "Eve of St. Mark." By the light of the extract, . . . I judge that the heroine — remorseful after trifling with a sick and now absent lover — might make her way to the minster-porch to learn his fate by the spell and perhaps see his figure enter but not return.' The extract from Keats's letter is as follows: 'If my health would bear it, I could write a Poem which I have in my head, which would be a consolation for people in such a situation as mine. I would show some one in Love as I am, with a person living in such Liberty as you do.'

Each arched porch, and entry low,
Was fill'd with patient folk and slow,
With whispers hush, and shuffling feet,
While play'd the organ loud and sweet.

The bells had ceased, the prayers begun,
And Bertha had not yet half done
A curious volume, patch'd and torn,
That all day long, from earliest morn,
Had taken captive her two eyes,
Among its golden broideries;
Perplex'd her with a thousand things, —
The stars of Heaven, and angels' wings, 3
Martyrs in a fiery blaze,
Azure saints and silver rays,
Moses' breastplate, and the seven
Candlesticks John saw in Heaven,
The winged Lion of Saint Mark,

And the Covenantal Ark,
With its many mysteries,
Cherubim and golden mice.

Bertha was a maiden fair,
Dwelling in th' old Minster-square; 40
From her fireside she could see,
Sidelong, its rich antiquity,
Far as the Bishop's garden-wall;
Where sycamores and elm-trees tall,
Full-leaved, the forest had outstript,
By no sharp north-wind ever nipt,
So shelter'd by the mighty pile.
Bertha arose, and read awhile,
With forehead 'gainst the window-pane.
Again she tried, and then again, 50
Until the dusk eve left her dark
Upon the legend of St. Mark.
From plaited lawn-frill, fine and thin,
She lifted up her soft warm chin,
With aching neck and swimming eyes,
And dazed with saintly imag'ries.

All was gloom, and silent all,
Save now and then the still foot-fall
Of one returning homewards late,
Past the echoing minster-gate.
The clamorous daws, that all the day
Above tree-tops and towers play,
Pair by pair had gone to rest,
Each in its ancient belfry-nest,
Where asleep they fall betimes,
To music and the drowsy chimes.

All was silent, all was gloom,
Abroad and in the homely room:
Down she sat, poor cheated soul!
And struck a lamp from the dismal coal; 70
Lean'd forward, with bright drooping hair
And slant book, full against the glare.
Her shadow, in uneasy guise,
Hover'd about, a giant size,
On ceiling-beam and old oak chair,
The parrot's cage, and panel-square;

And the warm angled winter-screen,
On which were many monsters seen,
Call'd doves of Siam, Lima mice,
And legless birds of Paradise, 80
Macaw, and tender Avadavat,
And silken-furr'd Angora cat.
Untired she read, her shadow still
Glower'd about, as it would fill
The room with wildest forms and shades,
As though some ghostly queen of spades
Had come to mock behind her back,
And dance, and ruffle her garments black.
Untired she read the legend page,
Of holy Mark, from youth to age, 90
On land, on sea, in pagan chains,
Rejoicing for his many pains.
Sometimes the learned eremite,
With golden star, or dagger bright,
Referr'd to pious poesies
Written in smallest crow-quill size
Beneath the text; and thus the rhyme
Was parcell'd out from time to time:
—— ' Als writith he of swevenis,
Men han beforne they wake in bliss, 100
Whanne that hir friendes thinke him bound
In crimped shroude farre under grounde;
And how a litling child mote be
A saint er its nativitie,
Gif that the modre (God her blesse !)
Kepen in solitarinesse,
And kissen devoute the holy croce,
Of Goddes love, and Sathan's force, —
He writith; and thinges many mo
Of swiche thinges I may not show. 110
Bot I must tellen verilie
Somdel of Saintè Cicilie,
And chieffie what he auctorethe
Of Saintè Markis life and dethe: '

At length her constant eyelids come
Upon the fervent martyrdom;
Then lastly to his holy shrine,
Exalt amid the tapers' shine
At Venice, —

HYPERION

A FRAGMENT

The first mention of *Hyperion* in Keats's letters occurs in that written on Christmas day, 1818, to his brother and sister in America, in which he says: 'I think you knew before you left England that my next subject would be "the fall of Hyperion." I went on a little with it last night, but it will take some time to get into the vein again. I will not give you any extracts because I wish the whole to make an impression.' He speaks of it a week later as 'scarce begun.' Again, February 14, 1819, he writes to the same: 'I have not gone on with *Hyperion* — for to tell the truth I have not been in great cue for writing lately — I must wait for the spring to rouse me up a little.' In August he told Bailey that he had been writing parts of *Hyperion*, but it is quite plain that he did little continuous work on it, but was drawn off by his tales and tragedy. From Winchester, September 22, 1819, he writes to Reynolds: 'I have given up *Hyperion* — there were too many Miltonic inversions in it — Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful, or, rather, artist's humour. I wish to give myself up to other sensations. English ought to be kept up. It may be interesting to you to pick out some lines from *Hyperion*, and put a mark X to the false beauty proceeding from art, and one || to the true voice of feeling. Upon my soul 't was imagination — I cannot make the distinction — every now and then there is a Miltonic intonation — but I cannot make the division properly.' From the silence regarding the poem in his after letters, it would appear that he left it at this stage.

That Keats designed a large epic in *Hyperion*, which was to be in ten books, is plain, but it is also tolerably clear that he abandoned his purpose, for he did not actually forbid the publication of the fragment, though it is doubtful if the whole reason for his action is given in the *Publishers' Advertisement* to the 1820 volume, containing the poem. 'If any apology be thought necessary,' it is there said, 'for the

appearance of the unfinished poem of *Hyperion*, the publishers beg to state that they alone are responsible, as it was printed at their particular request, and contrary to the wish of the author. The poem was intended to have been of equal length with *Endymion*, but the reception given to that work discouraged the author from proceeding.'

Keats's friend Woodhouse, in his interleaved and annotated copy of *Endymion*, says of *Hyperion*: 'The poem if completed would have treated of the dethronement of Hyperion, the former God of the Sun, by Apollo, — and incidentally of those of Oceanus by Neptune, of Saturn by Jupiter, etc., and of the war of the Giants for Saturn's reëstablishment, with other events, of which we have but very dark hints in the mythological poets of Greece and Rome.'

It is not impossible that besides the inertia produced by diminution of physical powers, another reason existed for Keats's failure to complete his poem. In the two full books which we have, he had stated so fully and explicitly the underlying thought in his interpretation of the myth that his interest in any delineation of a hopeless struggle might well have been unequal to the task. The speeches successively of Oceanus and Clymene which so enraged Enceladus were the masculine and feminine confessions that as their own supremacy over the antecedent chaos had been due to the law which made order expel disorder, so the supremacy of the new race of gods over them was due to the still further law

'That first in beauty should be first in might.'

Nay, more, the vision they have is not of a restoration of the old order, but of the defeat of the new by some still more distant evolution.

'Another race may drive
Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.'

Of the relation of this poem to *Hyperion*, a *Vision*, see the Appendix, where the other fragment is printed.

BOOK I

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale
 Far sunken from the healthy breath of
 morn,
 Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one
 star,
 At gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
 Till as the silence round about his lair;
 Forest on forest hung about his head
 Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was
 there,
 Not so much life as on a summer's day
 Robs not one light seed from the feather'd
 grass,
 But where the dead leaf fell, there did it
 rest. 10
 A stream went voiceless by, still deadened
 more
 By reason of his fallen divinity
 Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her
 reeds
 Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

 Along the margin-sand large foot-marks
 went,
 No further than to where his feet had
 stray'd,
 And slept there since. Upon the sodden
 ground
 His old right hand lay nerveless, listless,
 dead,
 Unscptred; and his realmless eyes were
 closed;
 While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to
 the Earth, 20
 His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

 It seem'd no force could wake him from
 his place;
 But there came one, who with a kindred
 hand
 Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending
 low
 With reverence, though to one who knew
 it not.
 She was a Goddess of the infant world;
 By her in stature the tall Amazon

Had stood a pigmy's height: she would
 have ta'en
 Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;
 Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel. 30
 Her face was large as that of Memphian
 sphinx,
 Pedestal'd haply in a palace-court,
 When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
 But oh! how unlike marble was that face;
 How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
 Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
 There was a listening fear in her regard,
 As if calamity had but begun;
 As if the vanward clouds of evil days 39
 Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
 Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
 One hand she press'd upon that aching
 spot
 Where beats the human heart, as if just
 there,
 Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain:
 The other upon Saturn's bended neck
 She laid, and to the level of his ear
 Leaning with parted lips, some words she
 spake
 In solemn tenour and deep organ tone:
 Some mourning words, which in our feeble
 tongue
 Would come in these like accents; O how
 frail 50
 To that large utterance of the early Gods!
 'Saturn, look up! — though wherefore,
 poor old King?
 I have no comfort for thee, no not one:
 I cannot say, "O wherefore sleepest thou?"
 For heaven is parted from thee, and the
 earth
 Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;
 And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
 Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the
 air
 Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
 Thy thunder, conscious of the new com-
 mand, 60
 Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
 And thy sharp lightning in unpractised
 hands
 Scorches and burns our once serene domain.

O aching time ! O moments big as years !
All as ye pass swell out the monstrous
truth,

And press it so upon our weary griefs
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
Saturn, sleep on:—O thoughtless, why
did I

Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude ?
Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes ? 70
Saturn, sleep on ! while at thy feet I
weep.

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-robed senators of mighty
woods,

Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest
stars,

Dream, and so dream all night without a
stir,

Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave:

So came these words and went; the while
in tears

She touch'd her fair large forehead to the
ground, 80

Just where her falling hair might be out-
spread

A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
Her silver seasons four upon the night,
And still these two were postured motion-
less,

Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;
The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:
Until at length old Saturn lifted up 89
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess; and then
spake,

As with a palsied tongue, and while his
beard

Shook horrid with such aspen-malady:

'O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face;

Look up, and let me see our doom in it;

Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape

Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the
voice

Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow
Naked and bare of its great diadem, 10
Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had
power

To make me desolate ? whence came the
strength ?

How was it nurtured to such bursting forth
While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous
grasp ?

But it is so; and I am smother'd up,
And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale,
Of admonitions to the winds and seas, 10
Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
And all those acts which Deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in.—I am gone
Away from my own bosom: I have left
My strong identity, my real self,
Somewhere between the throne, and where
I sit

Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea
search !

Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them
round

Upon all space: space starr'd, and lorn of
light;

Space region'd with life-air, and barren
void;

Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell. 12
Search, Thea, search ! and tell me if thou
seest

A certain shape or shadow, making way
With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
A heaven he lost erewhile: it must — i
must

Be of ripe progress — Saturn must be King
Yes, there must be a golden victory;
There must be Gods thrown down, and
trumpets blown

Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir 13
Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall
be

Beautiful things made new, for the sur-
prise

of the sky-children; I will give command:
Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?'

This passion lifted him upon his feet,
and made his hands to struggle in the air,
his Druid locks to shake and ooze with
sweat,
his eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing
deep; 139

A little time, and then again he snatch'd
utterance thus:— 'But cannot I create?
cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
another world, another universe,
to overbear and crumble this to nought?
Where is another chaos? Where?'— That
word

found way unto Olympus, and made quake
the rebel three.— Thea was startled up,
and in her bearing was a sort of hope,
as thus she quick-voiced spake, yet full of
awe.

'This cheers our fallen house: come to
our friends, 150
O Saturn! come away, and give them
heart;
I know the covert, for thence came I
hither.'

Thus brief; and then with beseeching eyes she
went
With backward footing through the shade
a space:

He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the
way
Through aged boughs, that yielded like the
mist

Which eagles cleave upmounting from
their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears
were shed,
More sorrow like to this, and such like
woe,

Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of
scribe: 160

The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-
bound,

Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,
And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's
voice.

But one of the whole mammoth-brood still
kept

His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty;
Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire
Still sat, still snuff'd the incesp, teeming
up

From man to the sun's God; yet unsecure:
For as among us mortals omens drear
Fright and perplex, so also shudder'd he,
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated
screech, 171

Or the familiar visiting of one
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace
bright

Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obe-
lisks,

Glared a blood-red through all its thousand
courts,

Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries; 180
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flush'd angrily: while sometimes eagles'
wings,

Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
Darken'd the place; and neighing steeds
were heard,

Not heard before by Gods or wondering
men.

Also, when he would taste the spicy
wreaths

Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick:
And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west,
After the full completion of fair day, 191
For rest divine upon exalted couch
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He paced away the pleasant hours of ease
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall;
While far within each aisle and deep re-
cess,

His winged minions in close clusters stood,

Amazed and full of fear; like anxious men
Who on wide plains gather in panting
troops,

When earthquakes jar their battlements
and towers. 200

Even now, while Saturn, roused from icy
trance,

Went step for step with Thea through the
woods,

Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the west;
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
In smoothest silence, save what solemn
tubes,

Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of
sweet

And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melo-
dies;

And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye, 210
That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath;
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his
heels,

And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
That scared away the meek ethereal Hours
And made their dove-wings tremble. On
he flared,

From stately nave to nave, from vault to
vault,

Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed
light,

And diamond-paved lustrous long ar-
cades, 220

Until he reach'd the great main cupola;
There standing fierce beneath, he stamp'd
his foot,

And from the basements deep to the high
towers

Jarr'd his own golden region; and before
The quavering thunder thereupon had
ceased,

His voice leapt out, despite of godlike
curb,

To this result: 'O dreams of day and
night!

O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!
O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!
O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded
pools!

Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye
why

Is my eternal essence thus distraught
To see and to behold these horrors new?
Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?

Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes
Of all my lucent empire? It is left
Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine. 24
The blaze, the splendour, and the symme-
try,

I cannot see — but darkness, death and
darkness.

Even here, into my centre of repose,
The shady visions come to domineer,
Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp. —
Fall! — No, by Tellus and her briny robes
Over the fiery frontier of my realms
I will advance a terrible right arm
Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel
Jove,

And bid old Saturn take his throne again.
He spake, and ceased, the while a heavie
threat 25

Held struggle with his throat, but came
not forth;

For as in theatres of crowded men
Hubbub increases more they call out
'Hush!'

So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pal-
Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and
cold;

And from the mirror'd level where he stood
A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.

At this, through all his bulk an agony
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the
crown, 26

Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
Making slow way, with head and neck con-
vulsed

From over-strained might. Released, he
fled

o the eastern gates, and full six dewy
 hours
 efore the dawn in season due should
 blush,
 e breathed fierce breath against the sleepy
 portals,
 lear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them
 wide
 uddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
 The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
 Each day from east to west the heavens
 through, 270
 spun round in sable curtaining of clouds;
 Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and
 hid,
 But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
 Circles, and ares, and broad-belted colume,
 Glow'd through, and wrought upon the
 muffling dark
 Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir
 deep
 Up to the zenith, — hieroglyphics old,
 Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
 Then living on the earth, with labouring
 thought
 Won from the gaze of many centuries: 280
 Now lost, save what we find on remnants
 huge
 Of stone, or marble swart; their import
 gone,
 Their wisdom long since fled. — Two wings
 this orb
 Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
 Ever exalted at the God's approach:
 And now, from forth the gloom their
 plumes immense
 Rose, one by one, till all outspread were;
 While still the dazzling globe maintain'd
 eclipse,
 Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
 Fain would he have commanded, fain took
 throne 290
 And bid the day begin, if but for change.
 He might not: — No, though a primeval
 God:
 The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.
 Therefore the operations of the dawn
 Stay'd in their birth, even as here 't is told.

Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
 Eager to sail their orb; the porches wide
 Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night;
 And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new
 woes, 299
 Unused to bend, by hard compulsion bent
 His spirit to the sorrow of the time;
 And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
 Upon the boundaries of day and night,
 He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance
 faint.
 There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars
 Look'd down on him with pity, and the
 voice
 Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
 Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear:
 'O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
 And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries 310
 All unrevealed even to the powers
 Which met at thy creating; at whose joys
 And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
 I, Cœlus, wonder, how they came and
 whence;
 And at the fruits thereof what shapes they
 be,
 Distinct, and visible; symbols divine,
 Manifestations of that beauteous life
 Diffused unseen throughout eternal space:
 Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest
 child!
 Of these, thy brethren and the God-
 desses! 320
 There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
 Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
 I saw my first-born tumbled from his
 throne!
 To me his arms were spread, to me his
 voice
 Found way from forth the thunders round
 his head!
 Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face.
 Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear
 there is:
 For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
 Divine ye were created, and divine
 In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd, 330
 Unruffled, like high Gods, ye lived and
 ruled:

Now I behold in you fear, hope, and
wrath;

Actions of rage and passion; even as
I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
In men who die.—This is the grief, O
Son!

Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!
Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,
As thou canst move about, an evident
God;

And canst oppose to each malignant hour
Ethereal presence:—I am but a voice; ³⁴⁰
My life is but the life of winds and tides,
No more than winds and tides can I
avail:—

But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the
van

Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's
barb

Before the tense string murmur.—To the
earth!

For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his
woes.

Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright
sun,

And of thy seasons be a careful nurse.'—
Ere half this region-whisper had come
down,

Hyperion arose, and on the stars ³⁵⁰
Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide
Until it ceased; and still he kept them
wide:

And still they were the same bright, pa-
tient stars.

Then with a slow incline of his broad
breast,

Like to a diver in the pearly seas,
Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,
And plunged all noiseless into the deep
night.

BOOK II

Just at the self-same beat of Time's wide
wings

Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad
place

Where Cybele and the bruised Titan
mourn'd.

It was a den where no insulting light
Could glimmer on their tears; where their
own groans

They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrent
hoarse,

Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that
seem'd

Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous
horns;

And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.

Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assem-
bled:

Some chain'd in torture, and some wander-
ing.

Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon,
With many more, the brawniest in assault;
Were pent in regions of laborious breath;
Dungeon'd in opaque element to keep
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and a-
their limbs

Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp'd and
screw'd;

Without a motion, save of their big heart
Heaving in pain, and horribly convulsed
With sanguine, feverous, boiling gurge
pulse.

Mnemosyne was straying in the world;
Far from her moon had Phœbe wandered;
And many else were free to roam abroad,
But for the main, here found they cover-
drear.

Scarce images of life, one here, one there
Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal
cirque

Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault
The Heaven itself, is blinded through the
night.

Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour
gave

Or word, or look, or action of despair. 40
Creüs was one; his ponderous iron mace
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and
pined.

Iapetus another; in his grasp,
A serpent's plashy neck; its barbed tongue
Squeezed from the gorge, and all its un-
curl'd length

Dead; and because the creature could not
spit

Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
Next Cottus: prone he lay, chin uppermost,
As though in pain: for still upon the flint 50
He ground severe his skull, with open
mouth

And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
Though feminine, than any of her sons:
More thought than woe was in her dusky
face,

For she was prophesying of her glory;
And in her wide imagination stood
Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles. 60

Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelve,
Upon his elbow raised, all prostrate else,
Shadow'd Enceladus; once tame and mild
As grazing ox unworried in the meads;
Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,
He meditated, plotted, and even now
Was hurling mountains in that second
war, 70

Not long delay'd, that scared the younger
Gods

To hide themselves in forms of beast and
bird.

Not far hence Atlas; and beside him prone
Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd
close

Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap
Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.

In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from
sight;

No shape distinguishable, more than when
Thick night confounds the pine-tops with
the clouds: 80

And many else whose names may not be
told.

For when the Muse's wings are air-ward
spread,

Who shall delay her flight? And she
must chant

Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had
climb'd

With damp and slippery footing from a
depth

More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature
grew

Till on the level height their steps found
ease:

Then Thea spread abroad her trembling
arms

Upon the precincts of this nest of pain, 90
And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's
face:

There saw she direst strife; the supreme
God

At war with all the frailty of grief,
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all de-
spair.

Against these plagues he strove in vain:
for Fate

Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison: so that Thea,
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe. 100

As with us mortal men, the laden heart
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,
When it is nighing to the mournful house
Where other hearts are sick of the same
bruise;

So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,
Felt faint, and would have sunk among the
rest,

But that he met Enceladus's eye,

Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at
once
Came like an inspiration; and he shouted,
'Titans, behold your God!' at which some
groan'd; 110
Some started on their feet; some also
shouted;
Some wept, some wail'd — all bow'd with
reverence;
And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,
Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her fore-
head wan,
Her eyebrows thin and jet, and hollow
eyes.
There is a roaring in the bleak-grown
pines
When Winter lifts his voice; there is a
noise
Among immortals when a God gives sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to
load
His tongue with the full weight of utter-
less thought, 120
With thunder, and with music, and with
pomp:
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown
pines;
Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd
world,
No other sound succeeds; but ceasing here,
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice there-
from
Grew up like organ, that begins anew
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt
short,
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
Thus grew it up: — 'Not in my own sad
breast,
Which is its own great judge and searcher
out, 130
Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
Not in the legends of the first of days,
Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
Which starry Uranus with finger bright
Saved from the shores of darkness, when
the waves
Low-ebb'd still hid it up in shallow
gloom; —

And the which book ye know I ever kept
For my firm-based footstool: — Ah, in-
firm!
Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
Of element, earth, water, air, and fire, —
At war, at peace, or inter-quarrelling 140
One against one, or two, or three, or all
Each several one against the other three,
As fire with air loud warring when rain-
floods
Drown both, and press them both against
earth's face,
Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
Unhinges the poor world; — not in that
strife,
Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read
it deep,
Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
No, nowhere can unriddle, though I search,
And pore on Nature's universal scroll 150
Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
The first-born of all shaped and palpable
Gods,
Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,
O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye
are here!
O Titans, shall I say "Arise!" — Ye
groan:
Shall I say "Crouch!" — Ye groan.
What can I then?
O Heaven wide! O unseen parent dear!
What can I? Tell me, all ye brethren
Gods, 160
How we can war, how engine our great
wrath!
O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear
Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,
Ponderest high and deep; and in thy face
I see, astonished, that severe content
Which comes of thought and musing: give
us help!
So ended Saturn; and the God of the
Sea,
Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
But cogitation in his watery shades,
Arose, with locks not oozy, and began, 170

In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring
tongue
Caught infant-like from the far-foamed
sands.

O ye, whom wrath consumes ! who, pas-
sion-stung,

Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies !

Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,

My voice is not a bellows unto ire.

Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring
proof

How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop ;

And in the proof much comfort will I give,

If ye will take that comfort in its truth. ¹⁸⁰

We fall by course of Nature's law, not
force

Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou
Hast sifted well the atom-universe ;

But for this reason, that thou art the King,

And only blind from sheer supremacy,

One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,

Through which I wander'd to eternal truth.

And first, as thou wast not the first of pow-
ers,

So art thou not the last ; it cannot be ;

Thou art not the beginning nor the end. ¹⁹⁰

From chaos and parental darkness came

Light, the first fruits of that intestine
broil,

That sullen ferment, which for wondrous
ends

Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour
came,

And with it light, and light engendering

Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd

The whole enormous matter into life.

Upon that very hour, our parentage,

The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest :

Then thou first-born, and we the giant-
race, ²⁰⁰

Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous
realms.

Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 't is
pain ;

O folly ! for to bear all naked truths,

And to envisage circumstance, all calm,

That is the top of sovereignty. Mark
well !

As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though
once chiefs ;

And as we show beyond that Heaven and
Earth

In form and shape compact and beautiful,

In will, in action free, companionship, ²¹⁰

And thousand other signs of purer life ;

So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,

A power more strong in beauty, born of us

And fated to excel us, as we pass

In glory that old Darkness : nor are we

Thereby more conquer'd, than by us the
rule

Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull
soil

Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,

And feedeth still, more comely than itself ?

Can it deny the chieftdom of green groves ?

Or shall the tree be envious of the dove ²²¹

Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings

To wander wherewithal and find its joys ?

We are such forest-trees, and our fair
boughs

Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,

But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower

Above us in their beauty, and must reign

In right thereof ; for 't is the eternal law

That first in beauty should be first in
might : ²²⁹

Yea, by that law, another race may drive

Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.

Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,

My dispossessor ? Have ye seen his face ?

Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along

By noble winged creatures he hath made ?

I saw him on the calmed waters scud,

With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,

That it enforced me to bid sad farewell

To all my empire ; farewell sad I took,

And hither came, to see how dolorous fate

Had wrought upon ye ; and how I might
best ²⁴¹

Give consolation in this woe extreme.

Receive the truth, and let it be your balm.'

Whether through poz'd conviction, or
disdain,

They guarded silence, when Oceanus
Left murmuring, what deepest thought can
tell ?

But so it was, none answer'd for a space,
Save one whom none regarded, Clymene:
And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,
With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking
mild, 250

Thus wording timidly among the fierce:
' O Father, I am here the simplest voice,
And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,
And this thing woe crept in among our
hearta,

There to remain for ever, as I fear:
I would not bode of evil, if I thought
So weak a creature could turn off the help
Which by just right should come of mighty
Gods;

Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
Of what I heard, and how it made me
weep, 260
And know that we had parted from all
hope.

I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
Where a sweet clime was breathed from a
land

Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and
flowers.

Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief;
Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth;
So that I felt a movement in my heart
To chide, and to reproach that solitude
With songs of misery, music of our woes;
And sat me down, and took a mouthed
shell 270

And murmur'd into it, and made melody —
O melody no more ! for while I sang,
And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
Just opposite, an island of the sea,
There came enchantment with the shifting
wind,

That did both drown and keep alive my
ears.

I threw my shell away upon the sand,
And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
With that new blissful golden melody. 280
A living death was in each gush of sounds,

Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
Like pearl beads dropping sudden from
their string:

And then another, then another strain,
Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,
To hover round my head, and make me
sick

Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
And I was stopping up my frantic ears, 290
When, past all hindrance of my trembling
hands,

A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all
tune,

And still it cried, " Apollo ! young Apollo !
The morning-bright Apollo ! young Apollo ! "

I fled, it follow'd me, and cried, " Apollo ! "
O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt
Those pains of mine; O Saturn, hadst thou
felt,

Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be
heard.'

So far her voice flow'd on, like timorous
brook 300

That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,
And shudder'd; for the overwhelming
voice

Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath:
The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves
In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
Came booming thus, while still upon his
arm

He lean'd; not rising, from supreme con-
tempt.

' Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
Or to the over-foolish giant, Gods ? 310
Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
That rebel Jove's whole armoury were
spent,

Not world on world upon these shoulders
piled,

Could agonize me more than baby-words
In midst of this dethronement horrible.

Speak ! roar ! shout ! yell ! ye sleepy Titans all.

Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile ?
Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm ?
Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,

Thy scalding in the seas ? What ! have I roused 320

Your spleens with so few simple words as these ?

O joy ! for now I see ye are not lost :
O joy ! for now I see a thousand eyes
Wide-glaring for revenge.' — As this he said,

He lifted up his stature vast, and stood,
Still without intermission speaking thus :
'Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,

And purge the ether of our enemies ;
How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,
And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove, 330

Stifling that puny essence in its tent.
O let him feel the evil he hath done ;
For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,
Much pain have I for more than loss of realms :

The days of peace and slumberous calm
are fled ;

Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
When all the fair Existences of heaven
Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak : —

That was before our brows were taught to frown,

Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds ; 340

That was before we knew the winged thing,

Victory, might be lost, or might be won,
And be ye mindful that Hyperion,
Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced —

Hyperion, lo ! his radiance is here !'

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,
And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name

Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
A pallid gleam across his features stern :
Not savage, for he saw full many a God
Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all, 351

And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks

Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.

In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steepes,
All the sad spaces of oblivion,
And every gulf, and every chasm old, 360
And every height, and every sullen depth,
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams :

And all the everlasting cataracts,
And all the headlong torrents far and near,
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,

Now saw the light and made it terrible.
It was Hyperion : — a granite peak
His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view

The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself. 370
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk

Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking East :

Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp,

He utter'd, while his hands contemplative
He press'd together, and in silence stood.
Despondence seized again the fallen Gods
At sight of the dejected King of Day, 380
And many hid their faces from the light :
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
Among the brotherhood ; and, at their glare,

Uprose Iapetus, and Creüs too,
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode

To where he tower'd on his eminence.
There those four shouted forth old Saturn's
name;

Hyperion from the peak loud answered
'Saturn!'

Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
In whose face was no joy, though all the
Gods

390

Gave from their hollow throats the name
of 'Saturn!'

BOOK III

Thus in alternate uproar and sad peace,
Amazed were those Titans utterly.

O leave them, Muse! O leave them to
their woes;

For thou art weak to sing such tumults
dire:

A solitary sorrow best befits

Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.

Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt
find

Many a fallen old Divinity

Wandering in vain about bewildered shores.

Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,

And not a wind of heaven but will
breathe

21

In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute;

For lo! 't is for the Father of all verse.

Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,

Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,

And let the clouds of even and of morn

Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills;

Let the red wine within the goblet boil,

Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd
shells,

On sands or in great deeps, vermilion turn

Through all their labyrinths; and let the
maid

21

Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss sur-
prised.

Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,

Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,

And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and
beech,

In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest
song,

And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath
the shade:

Apollo is once more the golden theme!

Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun

Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers?

Together had he left his mother fair

And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,

And in the morning twilight wandered
forth

Beside the osiers of a rivulet,

Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.

The nightingale had ceased, and a few
stars

Were lingering in the heavens, while the
thrush

Began calm-throated. Throughout all the
isle

There was no covert, no retired cave

Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of
waves,

40

Though scarcely heard in many a green re-
cess.

He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright
tears

Went trickling down the golden bow he
held.

Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs

hard by

With solemn step an awful Goddess came,

And there was purport in her looks for
him,

Which he with eager guess began to read
Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said:

'How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea?

Or hath that antique mien and robed
form

51

Moved in these vales invisible till now?

Sure I have heard those vestments sweep-
ing o'er

The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced

The rustle of those ample skirts about
These grassy solitudes, and seen the flow-
ers

Lift up their heads, and still the whisper
pass'd.

Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,

And their eternal calm, and all that face,
 Or I have dream'd.' — 'Yes,' said the su-
 preme shape, 61
 'Thou hast dream'd of me; and awaking
 up
 Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
 Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all
 the vast
 Unwearied ear of the whole universe
 Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth
 Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not
 strange
 That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell
 me, youth,
 What sorrow thou canst feel; for I am sad
 When thou dost shed a tear: explain thy
 griefs 70
 To one who in this lonely isle hath been
 The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,
 From the young day when first thy infant
 hand
 Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine
 arm
 Could bend that bow heroic to all times.
 Show thy heart's secret to an ancient
 Power
 Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
 For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
 Of loveliness new-born.' — Apollo then,
 With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,
 Thus answer'd, while his white melodious
 throat 81
 Throbb'd with the syllables: — 'Mnemo-
 syne!
 Thy name is on my tongue, I know not
 how;
 Why should I tell thee what thou so well
 seest?
 Why should I strive to show what from
 thy lips
 Would come no mystery? For me, dark,
 dark,
 And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes:
 I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
 Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;
 And then upon the grass I sit, and moan, 90
 Like one who once had wings. — O why
 should I

Feel cursed and thwarted, when the liege-
 less air
 Yields to my step aspirant? why should I
 Spurn the green turf as hateful to my
 feet?
 Goddess benign, point forth some unknown
 thing:
 Are there not other regions than this isle?
 What are the stars? There is the sun, the
 sun!
 And the most patient brilliance of the
 moon!
 And stars by thousands! Point me out
 the way
 To any one particular beauteous star, 100
 And I will flit into it with my lyre,
 And make its silvery splendour pant with
 bliss.
 I have heard the cloudy thunder: Where
 is power?
 Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
 Makes this alarum in the elements,
 While I here idle listen on the shores
 In fearless yet in aching ignorance?
 O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,
 That wailleth every morn and eventide,
 Tell me why thus I rave, about these
 groves! 110
 Mute thou remainest — Mute! yet I can
 read
 A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:
 Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
 Names, deeds, gray legends, dire events,
 rebellions,
 Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
 Creations and destroyings, all at once
 Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
 And deify me, as if some blithe wine
 Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk, 119
 And so become immortal.' — Thus the God,
 While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
 Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast
 kept
 Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
 Soon wild commotions shook him, and made
 flush
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs:
 Most like the struggle at the gate of death;

Or liker still to one who should take leave
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
 As hot as death's is chill, with fierce con-
 vulse

Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd: 130
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.

During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
 Her arms as one who prophesied. — At
 length
 Apollo shriek'd;—and lo! from all his
 limbs

Celestial

TO AUTUMN

In a letter to Reynolds, written from Winchester, September 22, 1819, Keats jots down these sentences: 'How beautiful the season is now — How fine the air. A temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather — Dian skies — I never liked stubble-fields so much as now — Aye, better than the

chilly green of the spring. Somehow, a stubble-field looks warm in the same way that some pictures look warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it.' These autumn days in Winchester were the last of happy health for Keats. The poem was included in the 1820 volume.

I

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the
thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-
trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the
core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the
hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding
more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never
cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their
clammy cells.

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may
find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing
wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while
thy hook

Spares the next swath and all its
twined flowers:

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours
by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay,
where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music
too, —
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying
day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy
hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats
mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or
dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from
hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble
soft
The redbreast whistles from a garden-
croft,
And gathering swallows twitter in the
skies.

VERSES TO FANNY BRAWNE

Although these are not the only poems which owe their origin to Keats's consuming passion, they are grouped here because, ap-

parently written in the same period, they stand as a painful witness to the ebbing tide of Keats's life.

SONNET

The date 1819 is appended to this sonnet in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*. Mr. Forman connects it with a letter written to Fanny Brawne, October 11, 1819.

THE day is gone, and all its sweets are gone !

Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand, and softer breast,

Warm breath, light whisper, tender semitone,

Bright eyes, accomplish'd shape, and lang'rous waist !

Faded the flower and all its budded charms,

Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,

Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,

Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise !

Vanish'd unseasonably at shut of eve,

When the dusk holiday — or holineight —

Of fragrant-curtain'd love begins to weave

The woof of darkness thick, for hid delight:

But, as I've read love's missal through to-day,

He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray.

LINES TO FANNY

First published in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*, and there dated October, 1819; their exact date seems to be indicated by a passage in a letter to Fanny Brawne, written October 13, 1819, intimating some work, and breaking out into: 'I cannot proceed with any degree of content. I must write you a line or two and see if that will assist in dismissing you from my mind for ever so short a time.'

WHAT can I do to drive away
Remembrance from my eyes? for they
have seen,

Aye, an hour ago, my brilliant Queen !

Touch has a memory. O say, love, say,

What can I do to kill it and be free

In my old liberty ?

When every fair one that I saw was fair,

Enough to catch me in but half a snare,

Not keep me there:

When, howe'er poor or particolour'd things,

My muse had wings,

And ever ready was to take her course

Whither I bent her force,

Unintellectual, yet divine to me;—

Divine, I say!— What sea-bird o'er the sea

Is a philosopher the while he goes

Winging along where the great waters
throes ?

How shall I do

To get anew

Those moulted feathers, and so mount once
more

Above, above

The reach of fluttering Love,

And make him cower lowly while I soar ?

Shall I gulp wine ? No, that is vulgar
ism,

A heresy and schism,

Foisted into the canon law of love;—

No,— wine is only sweet to happy men;

More dismal cares

Seize on me unawares, —

Where shall I learn to get my peace again ?

To banish thoughts of that most hateful
land,

Dungeoner of my friends, that wicked
strand
Where they were wreck'd and live a
wrecked life;
That monstrous region, whose dull rivers
pour,
Ever from their sordid urns unto the shore,
Unown'd of any weedy-haired gods;
Whose winds, all zephyrless, hold scour-
ging rods,
Iced in the great lakes, to afflict mankind;
Whose rank-grown forests, frosted, black,
and blind,
Would fright a Dryad; whose harsh herb-
aged meads
Make lean and lank the starved ox while
he feeds;
There bad flowers have no scent, birds no
sweet song,
And great unerring Nature once seems
wrong.

O, for some sunny spell
To dissipate the shadows of this hell !
Say they are gone, — with the new dawn-
ing light
Steps forth my lady bright !
O, let me once more rest
My soul upon that dazzling breast !
Let once again these aching arms be placed,
The tender gaolers of thy waist !
And let me feel that warm breath here and
there

To spread a rapture in my very hair, —
O, the sweetness of the pain !
Give me those lips again !
Enough ! Enough ! it is enough for me
To dream of thee !

TO FANNY

With the date 1819 in *Life, Letters and Lit-
erary Remains.*

I CRY your mercy — pity — love — aye,
love !
Merciful love that tantalizes not,
One-thoughted, never-wandering, guileless
love,
Unmask'd, and being seen — without a
blot !
O ! let me have thee whole, — all — all —
be mine !
That shape, that fairness, that sweet mi-
nor zest
Of love, your kiss, — those hands, those
eyes divine,
That warm, white, lucent, million-plea-
sured breast, —
Yourself — your soul — in pity give me
all,
Withhold no atom's atom, or I die,
Or living on perhaps, your wretched thrall,
Forget, in the mist of idle misery,
Life's purposes — the palate of my mind
Losing its gust, and my ambition blind !

THE CAP AND BELLS

OR, THE JEALOUSIES

A Faery Tale. Unfinished

In a letter to John Taylor, his publisher, written from Hampstead, November 17, 1819, Keats, who was then in his most restless mood, writes impulsively: 'I have come to a determination not to publish anything I have now ready written; but, for all that, to publish a poem before long, and that I hope to make a fine one. As the marvellous is the most enticing, and the surest guarantee of harmonious numbers, I have been endeavouring to persuade myself to untether Fancy, and to let her manage for herself. I and myself cannot agree about this at all. Wonders are no wonders to me. I am more at home amongst men and women. I would rather read Chaucer than Ariosto. The little dramatic skill I may as yet have, however badly it might show in a drama, would, I think, be sufficient for a poem. I wish to diffuse the colouring of "St. Agnes' Eve" throughout a poem in which character and sentiment would be the figures to such drapery. Two or three such poems, if God should spare me, written in the course of the

next six years, would be a famous *Gradus ad Parnassum altissimum* — I mean they would nerve me up to the writing of a few fine plays — my greatest ambition, when I do feel ambitious. I am sorry to say that is very seldom.'

Lord Houghton quotes from Keats's friend, Charles Armitage Brown: 'This Poem was written subject to future amendments and omissions; it was begun without a plot, and without any presented laws for the supernatural machinery.' Keats apparently designed publishing the poem with the signature 'Lucy Vaughan Lloyd,' and it can only be taken as one of his feverish attempts at using his intellectual powers for self-maintenance, when he was discouraged at the prospect of commercial success with his genuine poetry. Hunt published some of the stanzas in *The Indicator* August 23, 1820, as written by 'a very good poetess Lucy V—— L——' and Lord Houghton included the whole in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains*.

I

In midmost Ind, beside Hydaspes cool,
There stood, or hover'd, tremulous in the
air,
A faery city, 'neath the potent rule
Of Emperor Elfinan; famed ev'rywhere
For love of mortal women, maidens fair,
Whose lips were solid, whose soft hands
were made
Of a fit mould and beauty, ripe and rare,
To pamper his slight wooing, warm yet
staid:
He loved girls smooth as shades, but hated
a mere shade.

II

This was a crime forbidden by the law;
And all the priesthood of his city wept,
For ruin and dismay they well foresaw,
If impious prince no bound or limit kept,
And faery Zendervester overstept;
They wept, he sinn'd, and still he would
sin on,
They dreamt of sin, and he sinn'd while
they slept;
In vain the pulpit thunder'd at the
throne,
Caricature was vain, and vain the tart lam-
poon.

III

Which seeing, his high court of parliament
 Laid a remonstrance at his Highness' feet,
 Praying his royal senses to content
 Themselves with what in faery land was sweet,
 Befitting best that shade with shade
 should meet:
 Whereat, to calm their fears, he promised soon
 From mortal tempters all to make retreat —
 Ay, even on the first of the new moon,
 An immaterial wife to espouse as heaven's boon.

IV

Meantime he sent a fluttering embassy
 To Pigmio, of Imaus sovereign,
 To half beg, and half demand, respectfully,
 The hand of his fair daughter Bellanaine;
 An audience had, and speaking done, they gain
 Their point, and bring the weeping bride away;
 Whom, with but one attendant, safely lain
 Upon their wings, they bore in bright array,
 While little harps were touch'd by many a lyric fay.

V

As in old pictures tender cherubim
 A child's soul thro' the sapphired canvas bear,
 So, thro' a real heaven, on they swim
 With the sweet princess on her plumaged lair,
 Speed giving to the winds her lustrous hair;
 And so she journey'd, sleeping or awake,
 Save when, for healthful exercise and air,

She chose to 'promener à l'aile,' or take
 A pigeon's somerset, for sport or change's sake.

VI

'Dear Princess, do not whisper me so loud,'
 Quoth Corallina, nurse and confidant,
 'Do not you see there, lurking in a cloud,
 Close at your back, that sly old Craft-cant ?
 He hears a whisper plainer than a rant:
 Dry up your tears, and do not look so blue;
 He's Elfinan's great state-spy militant,
 He's running, lying, flying footman, too —
 Dear mistress, let him have no handle
 against you !

VII

'Show him a mouse's tail, and he will guess,
 With metaphysic swiftness, at the mouse;
 Show him a garden, and with speed no less,
 He'll surmise sagely of a dwelling-house,
 And plot, in the same minute, how to chouse
 The owner out of it; show him a —'
 'Peace !
 Peace ! nor contrive thy mistress' ire to rouse !'
 Return'd the princess, 'my tongue shall not cease
 Till from this hated match I get a free release.

VIII

'Ah, beauteous mortal !' 'Hush !' quoth Coralline,
 'Really you must not talk of him indeed.'
 'You hush !' replied the mistress, with a shine
 Of anger in her eyes, enough to breed
 In stouter hearts than nurse's fear and dread:

'T was not the glance itself made nurse
 flinch,
 But of its threat she took the utmost
 heed;
 Not liking in her heart an hour-long
 pinch,
 Or a sharp needle run into her back an
 inch.

IX

So she was silenced, and fair Bellanaine,
 Writhing her little body with ennui,
 Continued to lament and to complain,
 That Fate, cross-purposing, should let
 her be
 Ravish'd away far from her dear coun-
 tree;
 That all her feelings should be set at
 nought,
 In trumping up this match so hastily,
 With lowland blood; and lowland blood
 she thought
 Poison, as every stanch true-born Imaian
 ought.

X

Sorely she grieved, and wetted three or
 four
 White Provence rose-leaves with her
 faery tears,
 But not for this cause; — alas! she had
 more
 Bad reasons for her sorrow, as appears
 In the famed memoirs of a thousand
 years,
 Written by Crafticant, and published
 By Parpaglion and Co., (those sly com-
 peers
 Who raked up ev'ry fact against the
 dead,)
 In Scarab Street, Panthea, at the Jubal's
 Head.

XI

Where, after a long hypereritic howl
 Against the vicious manners of the
 age,

He goes on to expose, with heart and
 soul,
 What vice in this or that year was the
 rage,
 Backbiting all the world in every page;
 With special strictures on the horri-
 crime,
 (Section'd and subsection'd with learn-
 ing sage,)
 Of faeries stooping on their wings sub-
 lime
 To kiss a mortal's lips, when such were in
 their prime.

XII

Turn to the copious index, you will find
 Somewhere in the column, headed let-
 ter B,
 The name of Bellanaine, if you're not
 blind;
 Then pray refer to the text, and you
 will see
 An article made up of calumny
 Against this highland princess, rating
 her
 For giving way, so over fashionably,
 To this new-fangled vice, which seems a
 burr
 Stuck in his moral throat, no coughing e'er
 could stir.

XIII

There he says plainly that she loved a
 man!
 That she around him flutter'd, flirted,
 toy'd,
 Before her marriage with great Elfi-
 nan;
 That after marriage too, she never joy'd
 In husband's company, but still employ'd
 Her wits to 'scape away to Angle-land;
 Where lived the youth, who worried and
 annoy'd
 Her tender heart, and its warm ardours
 fann'd
 To such a dreadful blaze, her side would
 scorch her hand.

XIV

But let us leave this idle tittle-tattle
 To waiting-maids, and bed-room co-
 teries,
 Nor till fit time against her fame wage
 battle.
 Poor Elfinan is very ill at ease,
 Let us resume his subject if you please:
 For it may comfort and console him
 much,
 To rhyme and syllable his miseries;
 Poor Elfinan! whose cruel fate was
 such,
 He sat and cursed a bride he knew he
 could not touch.

XV

Soon as (according to his promises)
 The bridal embassy had taken wing,
 And vanish'd, bird-like, o'er the suburb
 trees,
 The emperor, empierced with the sharp
 sting
 Of love, retired, vex'd and murmuring
 Like any drone shut from the fair bee-
 queen,
 Into his cabinet, and there did fling
 His limbs upon the sofa, full of spleen,
 And damn'd his House of Commons, in
 complete chagrin.

XVI

'I'll trounce some of the members,' cried
 the Prince,
 'I'll put a mark against some rebel
 names,
 I'll make the Opposition-benches wince,
 I'll show them very soon, to all their
 shames,
 What 'tis to smother up a Prince's
 flames;
 That ministers should join in it, I own,
 Surprises me! — they too at these high
 games!
 Am I an Emperor? Do I wear a crown?
 Imperial Elfinan, go hang thyself or drown!

XVII

'I'll trounce 'em! — there's the square-
 cut chancellor,
 His son shall never touch that bishopric;
 And for the nephew of old Palfior,
 I'll show him that his speeches made me
 sick,
 And give the colonelcy to Phalaric;
 The tiptoe marquis, moral and gallant,
 Shall lodge in shabby taverns upon tick;
 And for the Speaker's second cousin's
 aunt,
 She sha'n't be maid of honour, — by heaven
 that she sha'n't!

XVIII

'I'll shirk the Duke of A.; I'll cut his
 brother;
 I'll give no garter to his eldest son;
 I won't speak to his sister or his mother!
 The Viscount B. shall live at cut-and-
 run;
 But how in the world can I contrive to
 stun
 That fellow's voice, which plagues me
 worse than any,
 That stubborn fool, that impudent state-
 dun,
 Who sets down ev'ry sovereign as a
 zany, —
 That vulgar commoner, Esquire Bianco-
 pany?

XIX

'Monstrous affair! Pshaw! pah! what
 ugly minx
 Will they fetch from Imaus for my
 bride?
 Alas! my wearied heart within me
 sinks,
 To think that I must be so near allied
 To a cold dullard fay, — ah, woe betide!
 Ah, fairest of all human loveliness!
 Sweet Bertha! what crime can it be to
 glide
 About the fragrant plaitings of thy dress,
 Or kiss thine eye, or count thy locks, tress
 after tress?'

XX

So said, one minute's while his eyes remain'd
 Half lidded, piteous, languid, innocent;
 But, in a wink, their splendour they regain'd,
 Sparkling revenge with amorous fury blent.
 Love thwarted in bad temper oft has vent:
 He rose, he stamp'd his foot, he rang the bell,
 And order'd some death-warrants to be sent
 For signature: — somewhere the tempest fell,
 As many a poor fellow does not live to tell.

XXI

'At the same time, Eban,' — (this was his page,
 A fay of colour, slave from top to toe,
 Sent as a present, while yet under age,
 From the Viceroy of Zanguebar, — wise, slow,
 His speech, his only words were 'yes' and 'no,'
 But swift of look, and foot, and wing was he,) —
 'At the same time, Eban, this instant go
 To Hum the soothsayer, whose name I see
 Among the fresh arrivals in our empery.

XXII

'Bring Hum to me! But stay — here take my ring,
 The pledge of favour, that he not suspect
 Any foul play, or awkward murdering,
 Tho' I have bowstrung many of his sect;
 Throw in a hint, that if he should neglect
 One hour, the next shall see him in my grasp,
 And the next after that shall see him neck'd,

Or swallow'd by my hunger-starved asp, —
 And mention ('t is as well) the torture of the wasp.'

XXIII

These orders given, the Prince, in half a pet,
 Let o'er the silk his propping elbow slide,
 Caught up his little legs, and, in a fret,
 Fell on the sofa on his royal side.
 The slave retreated backwards, humble-eyed,
 And with a slave-like silence closed the door,
 And to old Hum thro' street and alley hied;
 He 'knew the city,' as we say, of yore,
 And for short cuts and turns, was nobody knew more.

XXIV

It was the time when wholesale dealers close
 Their shutters with a moody sense of wealth,
 But retail dealers, diligent, let loose
 The gas (objected to on score of health),
 Convey'd in little solder'd pipes by stealth,
 And make it flare in many a brilliant form,
 That all the powers of darkness it repell'th,
 Which to the oil-trade doth great scaith and harm,
 And supersedeth quite the use of the glow-worm.

XXV

Eban, untempted by the pastry-cooks,
 (Of pastry he got store within the palace),
 With hasty steps, wrapp'd cloak, and solemn looks,
 Incognito upon his errand sallies,
 His smelling-bottle ready for the allies;

He pass'd the hurdy-gurdies with disdain,

Vowing he'd have them sent on board the galleys;

Just as he made his vow, it 'gan to rain,
Therefore he call'd a coach, and bade it drive amain.

XXVI

'I'll pull the string,' said he, and further said,

'Polluted Jarvey! Ah, thou filthy hack!
Whose springs of life are all dried up and dead,

Whose linsey-woolsey lining hangs all slack,

Whose rug is straw, whose wholeness is a crack;

And evermore thy steps go clatter-clitter;

Whose glass once up can never be got back,

Who prov'st, with jolting arguments and bitter,

That 'tis of modern use to travel in a litter.

XXVII

'Thou inconvenience! thou hungry crop
For all corn! thou snail-creeper to and fro,

Who while thou goest ever seem'st to stop,

And fiddle-faddle standest while you go;
I' the morning, freighted with a weight of woe,

Unto some lazar-house thou journeyest,
And in the evening tak'st a double row
Of dowdies, for some dance or party drest,

Besides the goods meanwhile thou movest east and west.

XXVIII

'By thy ungallant bearing and sad mien,
An inch appears the utmost thou couldst budge:

Yet at the slightest nod, or hint, or sign,

Round to the curb-stone patient dost thou trudge,

School'd in a beckon, learned in a nudge,
A dull-eyed Argus watching for a fare;
Quiet and plodding thou dost bear no grudge

To whisking tilburies, or phaetons rare,
Curricles, or mail-coaches, swift beyond compare.'

XXIX

Philosophizing thus, he pull'd the check,
And bade the coachman wheel to such a street,

Who turning much his body, more his neck,

Louted full low, and hoarsely did him greet:

'Certes, Monsieur were best take to his feet,

Seeing his servant can no farther drive
For press of coaches, that to-night here meet,

Many as bees about a straw-capp'd hive,
When first for April honey into faint flowers they dive.'

XXX

Eban then paid his fare, and tiptoe went
To Hum's hotel; and, as he on did pass
With head inclined, each dusky lineament

Show'd in the pearl-paved street as in a glass;

His purple vest, that ever peeping was
Rich from the fluttering crimson of his cloak,

His silvery trowsers, and his silken sash
Tied in a burnish'd knot, their semblance took

Upon the mirror'd walls, wherever he might look.

XXXI

He smiled at self, and, smiling, show'd his teeth,

And seeing his white teeth, he smiled the more;

Lifted his eyebrows, spurn'd the path beneath,
 Show'd teeth again, and smiled as heretofore,
 Until he knock'd at the magician's door;
 Where, till the porter answer'd, might be seen,
 In the clear panel more he could adore, —
 His turban wreathed of gold, and white, and green,
 Mustachios, ear-ring, nose-ring, and his sabre keen.

XXXII

'Does not your master give a rout to-night ?'
 Quoth the dark page; 'Oh, no !' return'd the Swiss,
 'Next door but one to us, upon the right,
 The *Magazin des Modes* now open is
 Against the Emperor's wedding; — and, sir, this
 My master finds a monstrous horrid bore;
 As he retired, an hour ago iwis,
 With his best beard and brimstone, to explore
 And cast a quiet figure in his second floor.

XXXIII

'Gad ! he's obliged to stick to business !
 For chalk, I hear, stands at a pretty price;
 And as for aqua vitæ — there's a mess !
 The *dentes sapientiæ* of mice
 Our barber tells me too are on the rise, —
 Tinder's a lighter article, — nitre pure
 Goes off like lightning, — grains of Paradise
 At an enormous figure ! — stars not sure ! —
 Zodiac will not move without a slight douceur !

XXXIV

'Venus won't stir a peg without a fee,
 And master is too partial *entre nous*
 To —' 'Hush — hush !' cried Eban,
 'sure that is he

Coming down stairs, — by St. Bartholomew !
 As backwards as he can, — is't something new ?
 Or is't his custom, in the name of fun ?'
 'He always comes down backward, with one shoe' —
 Return'd the porter — 'off, and one shoe on,
 Like, saving shoe for sock or stocking, my man John !'

XXXV

It was indeed the great Magician,
 Feeling, with careful toe, for every stair,
 And retrograding careful as he can,
 Backwards and downwards from his own two pair:
 'Salpietro !' exclaimed Hum, 'is the dog there ?
 He's always in my way upon the mat !'
 'He's in the kitchen, or the Lord knows where,' —
 Replied the Swiss, — 'the nasty, yelping brat !'
 'Don't beat him !' return'd Hum, and on the floor came pat.

XXXVI

Then facing right about, he saw the Page,
 And said: 'Don't tell me what you want, Eban;
 The Emperor is now in a huge rage, —
 'T is nine to one he'll give you the rattan !
 Let us away !' Away together ran
 The plain-dress'd sage and spangled blackamoor,
 Nor rested till they stood to cool, and fan,
 And breathe themselves at th' Emperor's chamber door,
 When Eban thought he heard a soft imperial snore.

XXXVII

'I thought you guess'd, foretold, or prophesied,
 That's Majesty was in a raving fit ?'

'He dreams,' said Hum, 'or I have ever
 lied,
 That he is tearing you, sir, bit by bit.'
 'He's not asleep, and you have little
 wit,'
 Replied the Page, 'that little buzzing
 noise,
 Whate'er your palmistry may make of
 it,
 Comes from a plaything of the Em-
 peror's choice,
 From a Man-Tiger-Organ, prettiest of his
 toys.'

XXXVIII

Eban then usher'd in the learned Seer:
 Elfinan's back was turn'd, but, ne'erthe-
 less,
 Both, prostrate on the carpet, ear by
 ear,
 Crept silently, and waited in distress,
 Knowing the Emperor's moody bitter-
 ness;
 Eban especially, who on the floor 'gan
 Tremble and quake to death, — he feared
 less
 A dose of senna-tea, or nightmare Gor-
 gon,
 Than the Emperor when he play'd on his
 Man-Tiger-Organ.

XXXIX

They kiss'd nine times the carpet's vel-
 vet face
 Of glossy silk, soft, smooth, and meadow-
 green,
 Where the close eye in deep rich fur
 might trace
 A silver tissue, scantily to be seen,
 As daisies lurk'd in June-grass, buds in
 green;
 Sudden the music ceased, sudden the
 hand
 Of majesty, by dint of passion keen,
 Doubled into a common fist, went grand,
 And knock'd down three cut glasses, and
 his best ink-stand.

XL

Then turning round, he saw those trem-
 bling two:
 'Eban,' said he, 'as slaves should taste
 the fruits
 Of diligence, I shall remember you
 To-morrow, or next day, as time suits,
 In a finger conversation with my mutes, —
 Begone! — for you, Chaldean! here re-
 main!
 Fear not, quake not, and as good wine
 recruits
 A conjurer's spirits, what cup will you
 drain?
 Sherry in silver, hock in gold, or glass'd
 champagne?'

XLI

'Commander of the Faithful!' answer'd
 Hum,
 In preference to these, I'll merely taste
 A thimble-full of old Jamaica rum.'
 'A simple boon!' said Elfinan, 'thou
 may'st
 Have Nantz, with which my morning-
 coffee's laced.'¹
 'I'll have a glass of Nantz, then,' — said
 the Seer, —
 'Made racy — (sure my boldness is mis-
 placed!) —
 With the third part — (yet that is drink-
 ing dear!) —
 Of the least drop of *crème de citron* crystal
 clear.'

XLII

'I pledge you, Hum! and pledge my
 dearest love,
 My Bertha!' 'Bertha! Bertha!' cried
 the sage,
 'I know a many Berthas!' 'Mine's
 above
 All Berthas!' sighed the Emperor. 'I
 engage,'
 Said Hum, 'in duty, and in vassalage,

¹ 'Mr. Nisby is of opinion that laced coffee is bad for
 the head.' — *Spectator*.

To mention all the Berthas in the earth;—

There's Bertha Watson,—and Miss Bertha Page,—

This famed for languid eyes, and that for mirth,—

There's Bertha Blount of York,—and Bertha Knox of Perth.'

XLIII

'You seem to know'—'I do know,' answer'd Hum,

'Your Majesty's in love with some fine girl

Named Bertha; but her surname will not come,

Without a little conjuring.' 'Tis Pearl, 'Tis Bertha Pearl! What makes my brains so whirl?

And she is softer, fairer than her name!'

'Where does she live?' ask'd Hum.

'Her fair locks curl

So brightly, they put all our fays to shame!—

Live?—O! at Canterbury, with her old grand dame.'

XLIV

'Good! good!' cried Hum, 'I've known her from a child!

She is a changeling of my management; She was born at midnight in an Indian wild;

Her mother's screams with the striped tiger's blent,

While the torch-bearing slaves a halloo sent

Into the jungles; and her palanquin,

Rested amid the desert's dreariment,

Shook with her agony, till fair were seen

The little Bertha's eyes ope on the stars serene.'

XLV

'I can't say,' said the monarch, 'that may be

Just as it happen'd, true or else a bam!

Drink up your brandy, and sit down by me,

Feel, feel my pulse, how much in love am;

And if your science is not all a sham, Tell me some means to get the lad here.'

'Upon my honour!' said the son Cham,¹

'She is my dainty changeling, near and dear,

Although her story sounds at first a little queer.'

XLVI

'Convey her to me, Hum, or by my crown,

My sceptre, and my cross-surmounter globe,

I'll knock you—' 'Does your majesty mean—down?

No, no, you never could my feeling probe

To such a depth!' The Emperor took his robe,

And wept upon its purple palatine,

While Hum continued, shamming hal a sob,—

'In Canterbury doth your lady shine?

But let me cool your brandy with a little wine.'

XLVII

Whereat a narrow Flemish glass he took,

That since belong'd to Admiral De Witt

Admired it with a connoisseuring look,

And with the ripest claret crowned it,

And, ere the lively head could burst and fit,

He turn'd it quickly, nimbly upside down,

His mouth being held conveniently fit

To catch the treasure: 'Best in ail the town!'

He said, smack'd his moist lips, and gave a pleasant frown.

¹ Cham is said to have been the inventor of magic. Lucy learnt this from Bayle's Dictionary, and has copied a long Latin note from that work.

XLVIII

'Ah! good my Prince, weep not!' And
 then again
 He fill'd a bumper. 'Great Sire, do not
 weep!
 Your pulse is shocking, but I'll ease
 your pain.'
 'Fetch me that Ottoman, and prithee
 keep
 Your voice low,' said the Emperor, 'and
 steep
 Some lady's-fingers nice in Candy wine;
 And prithee, Hum, behind the screen do
 peep
 For the rose-water vase, magician mine!
 And sponge my forehead — so my love doth
 make me pine.'

XLIX

'Ah, cursed Bellanaine!' 'Don't think
 of her,'
 Rejoin'd the Mago, 'but on Bertha muse;
 For, by my choicest best barometer,
 You shall not throttled be in marriage
 noose;
 I've said it, sire; you only have to choose
 Bertha or Bellanaine.' So saying, he
 drew
 From the left pocket of his threadbare
 hose,
 A sampler hoarded slyly, good as new;
 Holding it by his thumb and finger full in
 view.

L

'Sire, this is Bertha Pearl's neat handy-
 work,
 Her name, see here, *Midsummer, ninety-
 one*' —
 Elfinan snatch'd it with a sudden jerk,
 And wept as if he never would have
 done,
 Honouring with royal tears the poor
 homespun;
 Whereon were broider'd tigers with black
 eyes,
 And long-tailed pheasants, and a rising
 sun,

Plenty of posies, great stags, butterflies
 Bigger than stags — a moon — with other
 mysteries.

LI

The monarch handled o'er and o'er again
 These day-school hieroglyphics with a
 sigh;
 Somewhat in sadness, but pleased in the
 main,
 Till this oracular couplet met his eye
 Astounded — *Cupid, I do thee defy!*
 It was too much. He shrunk back in
 his chair,
 Grew pale as death, and fainted — very
 nigh!
 'Pho! nonsense!' exclaim'd Hum, 'now
 don't despair:
 She does not mean it really. Cheer up,
 hearty — there!

LII

'And listen to my words. You say you
 won't,
 On any terms, marry Miss Bellanaine;
 It goes against your conscience — good!
 well, don't.
 You say, you love a mortal. I would
 fain
 Persuade your honour's highness to re-
 frain
 From peccadilloes. But, Sire, as I say,
 What good would that do? And, to be
 more plain,
 You would do me a mischief some odd
 day,
 Cut off my ears and hands, or head too, by
 my fay!

LIII

'Besides, manners forbid that I should
 pass any
 Vile strictures on the conduct of a prince
 Who should indulge his genius, if he has
 any,
 Not, like a subject, foolish matter mince.
 Now I think on't, perhaps I could con-
 vince

Your Majesty there is no crime at all
 In loving pretty little Bertha, since
 She's very delicate — not over tall, —
 A fairy's hand, and in the waist why —
 very small.'

LIV

'Ring the repeater, gentle Hum!' 'Tis
 five,'
 Said gentle Hum; 'the nights draw in
 apace;
 The little birds I hear are all alive;
 I see the dawning touch'd upon your face;
 Shall I put out the candles, please your
 Grace?'
 'Do put them out, and, without more
 ado,
 Tell me how I may that sweet girl em-
 brace, —
 How you can bring her to me.' 'That's
 for you,
 Great Emperor! to adventure, like a lover
 true.'

LV

'I fetch her!' — 'Yes, an't like your
 Majesty;
 And as she would be frighten'd wide
 awake,
 To travel such a distance through the
 sky,
 Use of some soft manœuvre you must
 make,
 For your convenience, and her dear
 nerves' sake;
 Nice way would be to bring her in a
 swoon,
 Anon, I'll tell what course were best to
 take;
 You must away this morning.' 'Hum!
 so soon?'
 'Sire, you must be in Kent by twelve
 o'clock at noon.'

LVI

At this great Cæsar started on his feet,
 Lifted his wings, and stood attentive-
 wise.

'Those wings to Canterbury you must
 beat,
 If you hold Bertha as a worthy prize,
 Look in the Almanack — *Moore* never
 lies —
 April the twenty-fourth — this coming
 day,
 Now breathing its new bloom upon the
 skies,
 Will end in St. Mark's Eve; — you must
 away,
 For on that eve alone can you the maid
 convey.'

LVII

Then the magician solemnly 'gan to
 frown,
 So that his frost-white eye-brows, be-
 coming low,
 Shaded his deep green eyes, and wrinkle
 brown
 Plaited upon his furnace-scorch'd brow:
 Forth from his hood that hung his neck
 below
 He lifted a bright casket of pure gold,
 Touch'd a spring-lock, and there in wood
 or snow,
 Charm'd into ever freezing, lay an old
 And legend-leaved book, mysterious to
 behold.

LVIII

'Take this same book — it will not bite
 you, Sire;
 There, put it underneath your royal
 arm;
 Though it's a pretty weight, it will not
 tire,
 But rather on your journey keep you
 warm:
 This is the magic, this the potent charm
 That shall drive Bertha to a fainting
 fit!
 When the time comes, don't feel the least
 alarm,
 But lift her from the ground, and swiftly
 fit
 Back to your palace.

LIX

'What shall I do with that same book?'
 'Why merely
 Lay it on Bertha's table, close beside
 Her work-box, and 't will help your purpose
 dearly;
 I say no more.' 'Or good or ill betide,
 Through the wide air to Kent this morn
 I glide!'
 Exclaim'd the Emperor, 'When I return,
 Ask what you will,—I'll give you my
 new bride!
 And take some more wine, Hum;—O,
 Heavens! I burn
 To be upon the wing! Now, now, that
 minx I spurn!'

LX

'Leave her to me,' rejoin'd the magian:
 'But how shall I account, illustrious fay!
 For thine imperial absence? Pho! I
 can
 Say you are very sick, and bar the way
 To your so loving courtiers for one day;
 If either of their two Archbishops' graces
 Should talk of extreme unction, I shall
 say
 You do not like cold pig with Latin
 phrases,
 Which never should be used but in alarm-
 ing cases.'

LXI

'Open the window, Hum; I'm ready
 now!'
 'Zooks!' exclaim'd Hum, as up the sash
 he drew,
 'Behold, your Majesty, upon the brow
 Of yonder hill, what crowds of people!'
 'Whew!
 The monster's always after something
 new,'
 Return'd his Highness, 'they are piping
 hot
 To see my pigsney Bellanaine. Hum!
 do
 Tighten my belt a little,—so, so,—not
 Too tight,—the book!—my wand!—so,
 nothing is forgot.'

LXII

'Wounds! how they shout!' said Hum,
 'and there,—see, see,
 Th' ambassador's return'd from Pigmio!
 The morning's very fine,—uncommonly!
 See, past the skirts of yon white cloud
 they go,
 Tinging it with soft crimsons! Now
 below
 The sable-pointed heads of firs and pines
 They dip, move on, and with them moves
 a glow
 Along the forest side! Now amber lines
 Reach the hill top, and now throughout the
 valley shines.'

LXIII

'Why, Hum, you're getting quite poeti-
 cal!
 Those *nows* you managed in a special
 style.'
 'If ever you have leisure, Sire, you shall
 See scraps of mine will make it worth
 your while,
 Tit-bits for Phoebus!—yes, you well
 may smile.
 Hark! hark! the bells!' 'A little
 further yet,
 Good Hum, and let me view this mighty
 coil.'
 Then the great Emperor full graceful set
 His elbow for a prop, and snuff'd his
 mignonette.

LXIV

The morn is full of holiday: loud bells
 With rival clamors ring from every spire;
 Cunningly-station'd music dies and swells
 In echoing places; when the winds re-
 spire,
 Light flags stream out like gauzy tongues
 of fire;
 A metropolitan murmur, lifeiful, warm,
 Comes from the northern suburbs; rich
 attire
 Freckles with red and gold the moving
 swarm;
 While here and there clear trumpets blow
 a keen alarm.

LXV

And now the fairy escort was seen clear,
 Like the old pageant of Aurora's train,
 Above a pearl-built minster, hovering
 near;
 First wily Crafticant, the chamberlain,
 Balanced upon his gray-grown pinions
 twain,
 His slender wand officially reveal'd;
 Then black gnomes scattering sixpences
 like rain;
 Then pages three and three; and next,
 slave-held,
 The Imaian 'scutcheon bright, — one mouse
 in argent field.

LXVI

Gentlemen pensioners next; and after
 them,
 A troop of winged Janizaries flew;
 Then slaves, as presents bearing many a
 gem;
 Then twelve physicians fluttering two
 and two;
 And next a chaplain in a cassock new;
 Then Lords in waiting; then (what head
 not reels
 For pleasure?) — the fair Princess in
 full view,
 Borne upon wings, — and very pleased
 she feels
 To have such splendour dance attendance
 at her heels.

LXVII

For there was more magnificence behind:
 She waved her handkerchief. 'Ah, very
 grand!'
 Cried Elfinan, and closed the window-
 blind;
 'And, Hum, we must not shilly-shally
 stand, —
 Adieu! adieu! I'm off for Angle-land!
 I say, old Hocus, have you such a thing
 About you, — feel your pockets, I com-
 mand, —
 I want, this instant, an invisible ring, —
 Thank you, old mummy! — now securely I
 take wing.'

LXVIII

'Then Elfinan swift vaulted from the floor
 And lighted graceful on the window-sill
 Under one arm the magic book he bore,
 The other he could wave about at will;
 Pale was his face, he still look'd very ill
 He bow'd at Bellanaine, and said —
 'Poor Bell!
 Farewell! farewell! and if for ever! still
 For ever fare thee well!' — and then he
 fell
 A laughing! — snapp'd his fingers! —
 shame it is to tell!

LXIX

'By'r Lady! he is gone!' cries Hum
 'and I, —
 (I own it), — have made too free with
 his wine;
 Old Crafticant will smoke me. By-the-
 bye!
 This room is full of jewels as a mine, —
 Dear valuable creatures, how ye shine!
 Some time to-day I must contrive
 minute,
 If Mercury propitiously incline,
 To examine his scrutoire, and see what
 in it,
 For of superfluous diamonds I as well may
 thin it.

LXX

'The Emperor's horrid bad; yes, that's
 my cue!
 Some histories say that this was Hum's
 last speech;
 That, being fuddled, he went reeling
 through
 The corridor, and scarce upright could
 reach
 The stair-head; that being gluttled as a
 leech,
 And used, as we ourselves have just now
 said,
 To manage stairs reversely, like a peach
 Too ripe, he fell, being puzzled in his
 head
 With liquor and the staircase: verdict —
 found stone dead.

LXXI

This, as a falsehood, Crafticanto treats;
 And as his style is of strange elegance,
 Gentle and tender, full of soft conceits,
 (Much like our Boswell's,) we will take a
 glance
 At his sweet prose, and, if we can, make
 dance
 His woven periods into careless rhyme;
 O, little faery Pegasus! rear — prance —
 Trot round the quarto — ordinary time!
 March, little Pegasus, with pawing hoof
 sublime!

LXXII

'Well, let us see, — *tenth book and chapter
 nine,* —
 Thus Crafticant pursues his diary: —
 'T was twelve o'clock on night, the wea-
 ther fine,
 Latitude thirty-six; our scouts descry
 A flight of starlings making rapidly
 Towards Thibet. Mem.: — birds fly in
 the night;
 From twelve to half-past — wings not fit
 to fly
 For a thick fog — the Princess sulky
 quite:
 Had for an extra shawl, and gave her
 nurse a bite.

LXXIII

'Five minutes before one — brought
 down a moth
 With my new double-barrel — stew'd
 the thighs,
 And made a very tolerable broth —
 Princess turn'd dainty, to our great sur-
 prise,
 Alter'd her mind, and thought it very
 nice:
 Seeing her pleasant, tried her with a
 pun,
 She frown'd; a monstrous owl across us
 flies
 About this time, — a sad old figure of
 fun;
 Bad omen — this new match can't be a
 happy one.

LXXIV

'From two to half-past, dusky way we
 made,
 Above the plains of Gobi, — desert,
 bleak;
 Beheld afar off, in the hooded shade
 Of darkness, a great mountain (strange
 to speak),
 Spitting, from forth its sulphur-baken
 peak,
 A fan-shaped burst of blood-red, arrowy
 fire,
 Turban'd with smoke, which still away
 did reek,
 Solid and black from that eternal pyre,
 Upon the laden winds that scantily could
 respire.

LXXV

'Just upon three o'clock, a falling star
 Created an alarm among our troop,
 Kill'd a man-cook, a page, and broke a
 jar,
 A tureen, and three dishes, at one swoop,
 Then passing by the Princess, sing'd her
 hoop:
 Could not conceive what Coralline was at,
 She clapp'd her hands three times, and
 cried out "Whoop!"
 Some strange Imaian custom. A large
 bat
 Came sudden 'fore my face, and brush'd
 against my hat.

LXXVI

'Five minutes thirteen seconds after
 three,
 Far in the west a mighty fire broke out,
 Conjectured, on the instant, it might be
 The city of Balk — 't was Balk beyond
 all doubt:
 A griffin, wheeling here and there about
 Kept reconnoitering us — doubled our
 guard —
 Lighted our torches, and kept up a shout,
 Till he sheer'd off — the Princess very
 scared —
 And many on their marrow-bones for death
 prepared.

LXXVII

'At half-past three arose the cheerful
moon —
Bivouack'd for four minutes on a cloud —
Where from the earth we heard a lively
tune
Of tambourines and pipes, severe and
loud,
While on a flowery lawn a brilliant
crowd
Cinque-parted danced, some half asleep
reposed
Beneath the green-faned cedars, some
did shroud
In silken tents, and 'mid light fragrance
dozed,
Or on the open turf their soothed eyelids
closed.

LXXVIII

'Dropp'd my gold watch. and kill'd a
kettle-drum —
It went for apoplexy — foolish folks ! —
Left it to pay the piper — a good sum —
(I've got a conscience, maugre people's
jokes,)
To scrape a little favour; 'gan to coax
Her Highness' pug-dog — got a sharp
rebuff —
She wish'd a game at whist — made
three revokes —
Turn'd from myself, her partner, in a
huff;
His Majesty will know her temper time
enough.

LXXIX

'She cried for chess — I play'd a game
with her —
Castled her king with such a vixen
look,
It bodes ill to his Majesty — (refer
To the second chapter of my fortieth
book,
And see what hoity-toity airs she took).
At half-past four the morn essay'd to
beam —
Saluted, as we pass'd, an early rook, —

The Princess fell asleep, and, in b
dream,
Talk'd of one Master Hubert, deep in b
esteem.

LXXX

'About this time — making delightf
way —
Shed a quill-feather from my larboa
wing —
Wish'd, trusted, hoped 't was no sign
decay —
Thank Heaven, I'm hearty yet ! — 't w
no such thing: —
At five the golden light began to sprin
With fiery shudder through the bloom
east;
At six we heard Panthea's church
ring —
The city all his unhived swarms had ca
To watch our grand approach, and hail
as we pass'd.

LXXXI

'As flowers turn their faces to the sun,
So on our flight with hungry eyes th
gaze,
And, as we shaped our course, this, th
way run,
With mad-cap pleasure, or hand-clasp
amaze:
Sweet in the air a mild-toned music play
And progresses through its own lab
rinth;
Buds gather'd from the green spring
middle-days,
They scatter'd — daisy, primrose, hy
cint —
Or round white columns wreathed fro
capital to plinth.

LXXXII

'Onward we floated o'er the pantir
streets,
That seem'd throughout with uphe
faces paved;
Look where we will, our bird's-eye visio
meets

Legions of holiday; bright standards
waved,
And fluttering ensigns emulously craved
Our minute's glance; a busy thunderous
roar,
From square to square, among the build-
ings raved,
As when the sea, at flow, gluts up once
more
the craggy hollowness of a wild-reefed
shore.

LXXXIII

'And "Bellanaine for ever!" shouted
they!
While that fair Princess, from her
winged chair,
Bow'd low with high demeanour, and, to
pay
Their new-blown loyalty with guerdon
fair,
Still emptied, at meet distance, here and
there,
A plenty horn of jewels. And here I
(Who wish to give the devil her due)
declare
Against that ugly piece of calumny,
Which calls them Highland pebble-stones
not worth a fly.

LXXXIV

'Still "Bellanaine!" they shouted, while
we glide
'Slant to a light Ionic portico,
The city's delicacy, and the pride
Of our Imperial Basilic; a row
Of lords and ladies, on each hand, make
show
Submissive of knee-bent obeisance,
All down the steps; and, as we enter'd, lo!
The strangest sight — the most unlook'd-
for chance —
All things turn'd topsy-turvy in a devil's
dance.

LXXXV

'Stead of his anxious Majesty and court
At the open doors, with wide saluting
eyes,

Congêes and scrape-graces of every sort,
And all the smooth routine of gallan-
tries,
Was seen, to our immoderate surprise,
A motley crowd thick gather'd in the
hall,
Lords, scullions, deputy-scul lions, with
wild cries
Stunning the vestibule from wall to wall,
Where the Chief Justice on his knees and
hands doth crawl.

LXXXVI

'Counts of the palace, and the state pur-
veyor
Of moth's-down, to make soft the royal
beds,
The Common Council and my fool Lord
Mayor
Marching a-row, each other slipshod
treads;
Powder'd bag-wigs and ruffy-tuffy heads
Of cinder wenches meet and soil each
other;
Toe crush'd with heel ill-natured fighting
breeds,
Frill-rumpling elbows brew up many a
bother,
And fists in the short ribs keep up the yell
and pother.

LXXXVII

'A Poet, mounted on the Court-Clown's
back,
Rode to the Princess swift with spurring
heels,
And close into her face, with rhyming
clack,
Began a Prothalamion; — she reels,
She falls, she faints! — while laughter
peals
Over her woman's weakness. "Where!"
cried I,
"Where is his Majesty?" No person
feels
Inclined to answer; wherefore instantly
I plunged into the crowd to find him or
to die.

LXXXVIII

'Jostling my way I gain'd the stairs, and
ran

To the first landing, where, incredible !
I met, far gone in liquor, that old man,
That vile impostor Hum, —— ,

So far so well, —

For we have proved the Mago never fell
Down stairs on Crafticanto's evidence;
And therefore duly shall proceed to tell,
Plain in our own original mood and
tense,

The sequel of this day, though labour 't is
immense !

THE LAST SONNET

On his way to Italy as his last chance of life,
the vessel which bore Keats had been beating
about the English Channel for a fortnight,
when an opportunity was given for landing for
a brief respite on the Dorsetshire coast. 'The
bright beauty of the day,' says Lord Hough-
ton, Keats's biographer, 'and the scene revived

the poet's drooping heart, and the inspira-
tion remained with him for some time even at
his return to the ship. It was then that
he composed that sonnet of solemn tenderness.
The date of the poem would thus be Septem-
ber or October, 1820.

BRIGHT star, would I were steadfast
thou art !

Not in lone splendour hung aloft
night,

And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite

The moving waters at their priestlike ta-
Of pure ablution round earth's hum

shores

Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask

Of snow upon the mountains and
moors:

No — yet still steadfast, still unchangeable

Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening
breast,

To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,

Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,

Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath

And so live ever — or else swoon to death

SUPPLEMENTARY VERSE

The collection which follows is not intended to be taken exactly as containing the leavings of Keats's genius; there are verses in the previous groups which might be placed here, if the intention was to make a marked division between his well-defined poetry and his experiments and mere scintillations; doubtless, too,

I. HYPERION: A VISION

Contributed by Lord Houghton to the third volume of the *Bibliographical and Historical Miscellanies* of the Philobiblion Society, 1856-1857. Lord Houghton afterward included it in a new edition of *The Life and Letters of John Keats*, 1867. He also printed it in the Aldine edition of 1876, where he recorded it as an early version of the poem. But Mr. Colvin quotes from Brown's MS.: 'In the evenings [of November and December, 1819] at his own desire, he occupied a separate apartment, and was deeply engaged in remodeling the fragment of *Hyperion* into the form of a Vision.' This attempt may well have added to Keats's reluctance to permit the fragmentary *Hyperion* to appear in the 1820 volume. For a full discussion of the question see the Appendix in *John Keats* by Sidney Colvin.

CANTO I

FANATICS have their dreams, wherewith they weave

A paradise for a sect; the savage, too,
From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep
Guesses at heaven; pity these have not
Trac'd upon vellum or wild Indian leaf
The shadows of melodious utterance,
But bare of laurel they live, dream, and die;
For Poesy alone can tell her dreams, —
With the fine spell of words alone can save
Imagination from the sable chain 10
And dumb enchantment. Who alive can say,
'Thou art no Poet — may'st not tell thy
dreams'?

Since every man whose soul is not a clod

on any such principle it would be just to take back into the respectability of larger type some of the lines here included. But it seemed wise to put into a subordinate group the poet's fragmentary and posthumous poems, and those which were plainly the mere playthings of his muse.

Hath visions and would speak, if he had loved,
And been well nurtured in his mother tongue.
Whether the dream now purpos'd to rehearse
Be poet's or fanatic's will be known
When this warm scribe, my hand, is in the
grave.

Methought I stood where trees of every clime,
Palm, myrtle, oak, and sycamore, and beech, 20
With plantane and spice-blossoms, made a
screen,

In neighbourhood of fountains (by the noise
Soft-showering in mine ears), and (by the touch
Of scent) not far from roses. Twining round
I saw an arbour with a drooping roof
Of trellis vines, and bells, and larger blooms,
Like floral censers, swinging light in air;
Before its wreathed doorway, on a mound
Of moss, was spread a feast of summer fruits,
Which, nearer seen, seem'd refuse of a meal 30
By angel tasted or our Mother Eve;
For empty shells were scatter'd on the grass,
And grapetalks but half-bare, and remnants
more
Sweet-smelling, whose pure kinds I could not
know.

Still was more plenty than the fabled horn
Thrice emptied could pour forth at banqueting,
For Proserpine return'd to her own fields,
Where the white heifers low. And appetite,
More yearning than on earth I ever felt,
Growing within, I ate deliciously, — 40
And, after not long, thirsted; for thereby
Stood a cool vessel of transparent juice
Sipp'd by the wander'd bee, the which I took,
And pledging all the mortals of the world,
And all the dead whose names are in our lips,
Drank. That full draught is parent of my
theme.

No Asian poppy nor elixir fine
 Of the soon-fading, jealous Caliphat,
 No poison gender'd in close monkish cell,
 To thin the scarlet conclave of old men, 50
 Could so have rapt unwilling life away.
 Among the fragrant husks and berries crush'd
 Upon the grass, I struggled hard against
 The domineering potion, but in vain.
 The cloudy swoon came on, and down I sank,
 Like a Silenus on an antique vase.
 How long I slumber'd 't is a chance to guess.
 When sense of life return'd, I started up
 As if with wings, but the fair trees were gone,
 The mossy mound and arbour were no more : 60
 I look'd around upon the curved sides
 Of an old sanctuary, with roof august,
 Builded so high, it seem'd that filmed clouds
 Might spread beneath as o'er the stars of heaven.

So old the place was, I remember'd none
 The like upon the earth : what I had seen
 Of grey cathedrals, buttress'd walls, rent towers,

The superannuations of sunk realms,
 Or Nature's rocks toil'd hard in waves and winds,

Seem'd but the faulture of decrepit things 70
 To that eternal domed monument.
 Upon the marble at my feet there lay
 Store of strange vessels and large draperies,
 Which needs had been of dyed asbestos wove,
 Or in that place the moth could not corrupt,
 So white the linen, so, in some, distinct
 Ran imageries from a sombre loom.
 All in a mingled heap confus'd there lay
 Robes, golden tongs, censer and chafing-dish,
 Girdles, and chains, and holy jewelries. 80

Turning from these with awe, once more I raised

My eyes to fathom the space every way :
 The embossed roof, the silent massy range
 Of columns north and south, ending in mist
 Of nothing ; then to eastward, where black gates

Were shut against the sunrise evermore ;
 Then to the west I look'd, and saw far off
 An image, huge of feature as a cloud,
 At level of whose feet an altar slept,
 To be approach'd on either side by steps 90
 And marble balustrade, and patient travail
 To count with toil the innumerable degrees.
 Toward the altar sober-pac'd I went,
 Repressing haste as too unholy there ;
 And, coming nearer, saw beside the shrine
 One ministering ; and there arose a flame
 When in mid-day the sickening east-wind

Shifts sudden to the south, the small war rain

Melts out the frozen incense from all flowers,
 And fills the air with so much pleasant health ;
 That even the dying man forgets his shroud ;
 Even so that lofty sacrificial fire,
 Sending forth Maian incense, spread around
 Forgetfulness of everything but bliss,
 And clouded all the altar with soft smoke ;
 From whose white fragrant curtains thus heard

Language pronounce'd : ' If thou canst not ascend

These steps, die on that marble where thou art.

Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,
 Will parch for lack of nutriment ; thy bones
 Will wither in few years, and vanish so
 That not the quickest eye could find a grain
 Of what thou now art on that pavement cold.
 The sands of thy short life are spent this hour,

And no hand in the universe can turn
 Thy hourglass, if these gummed leaves be burnt
 Ere thou canst mount up these immortal steps
 I heard, I look'd : two senses both at once,
 So fine, so subtle, felt the tyranny
 Of that fierce threat and the hard task proposed.

Prodigious seem'd the toil ; the leaves were y
 Burning, when suddenly a palsied chill
 Struck from the paved level up my limbs,
 And was ascending quick to put cold grasp
 Upon those streams that pulse beside the throat
 I shriek'd, and the sharp anguish of my shri
 Stung my own ears ; I strove hard to escape
 The numbness, strove to gain the lowest step.
 Slow, heavy, deadly was my pace : the cold
 Grew stifling, suffocating at the heart ;
 And when I clasp'd my hands I felt them not.
 One minute before death my ic'd foot touch'd
 The lowest stair ; and, as it touch'd, life seem'd
 To pour in at the toes ; I mounted up
 As once fair angels on a ladder flew
 From the green turf to heaven. ' Holy Power
 Cried I, approaching near the horned shrine,
 ' What am I that should so be saved from death ?

What am I that another death come not
 To choke my utterance, sacrilegious, here ? ' 10
 Then said the veiled shadow : ' Thou hast felt
 What 't is to die and live again before
 Thy fasted hour ; that thou hadst power to d

80
 Is thine own safety ; thou hast dated on
 Thy doom.' ' High Prophetess,' said I, ' purp
 off,

Benign, if so it please thee, my mind's film,'
None can usurp this height,' return'd that
shade,

But those to whom the miseries of the world
Are misery, and will not let them rest.
All else who find a haven in the world, 150
Where they may thoughtless sleep away their
days,

If by a chance into this fane they come,
Rot on the pavement where thou rottedst half.'
Are there not thousands in the world,' said I,
Encourag'd by the sooth voice of the shade,
Who love their fellows even to the death,
Who feel the giant agony of the world,
And more, like slaves to poor humanity,
Labour for mortal good? I sure should see
Other men here, but I am here alone.' 160
Those whom thou spakest of are no visiona-
ries,'

Rejoind' that voice; 'they are no dreamers
weak;
They seek no wonder but the human face,
No music but a happy-noted voice:
They come not here, they have no thought to
come;

And thou art here, for thou art less than they.
What benefit canst thou do, or all thy tribe,
To the great world? Thou art a dreaming
thing,

A fever of thyself: think of the earth;
What bliss, even in hope, is there for thee? 170
What haven? every creature hath its home,
Every sole man hath days of joy and pain,
Whether his labours be sublime or low —
The pain alone, the joy alone, distinct:
Only the dreamer venoms all his days,
Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve.
Therefore, that happiness be somewhat shared,
Such things as thou art are admitted oft
Into like gardens thou didst pass erewhile,
And suffer'd in these temples: for that cause 180
Thou standest safe beneath this statue's knees.'

'That I am favour'd for unworthiness,
By such propitious parley medicined
In sickness not ignoble, I rejoice,
Aye, and could weep for love of such award.'
So answer'd I, continuing, 'If it please,
Majestic shadow, tell me where I am,
Whose altar this, for whom this incense curls;
What image this whose face I cannot see
For the broad marble knees; and who thou
art, 190

Of accent feminine so courteous?'

Then the tall shade, in drooping linen veil'd,
Spoke out, so much more earnest, that her
breath

Stirr'd the thin folds of gauze that drooping
hung

About a golden censer from her hand
Pendent; and by her voice I knew she shed
Long-treasured tears. 'This temple, sad and
lone,

Is all spar'd from the thunder of a war
Foughten long since by giant hierarchy
Against rebellion: this old image here, 200
Whose carved features wrinkled as he fell,
Is Saturn's; I, Moneta, left supreme,
Sole goddess of this desolation.'

I had no words to answer, for my tongue,
Useless, could find about its roofed home
No syllable of a fit majesty
To make rejoinder to Moneta's mourn:
There was a silence, while the altar's blaze
Was fainting for sweet food. I look'd thereon,
And on the paved floor, where nigh were piled
Faggots of cinnamon, and many heaps 211

Of other crisped spicewood: then again
I look'd upon the altar, and its horns
Whiten'd with ashes, and its languorous flame,
And then upon the offerings again;
And so, by turns, till sad Moneta cried:
'The sacrifice is done, but not the less
Will I be kind to thee for thy good will.
My power, which to me is still a curse,
Shall be to thee a wonder; for the scenes 220
Still swooning vivid through my globed brain,
With an electal changing misery,
Thou shalt with these dull mortal eyes behold
Free from all pain, if wonder pain thee not.'
As near as an immortal's sphered words
Could to a mother's soften were these last:
And yet I had a terror of her robes,
And chiefly of the veils that from her brow
Hung pale, and curtain'd her in mysteries,
That made my heart too small to hold its
blood. 230

This saw that Goddess, and with sacred hand
Parted the veils. Then saw I a wan face,
Not pin'd by human sorrows, but bright-
blanch'd

By an immortal sickness which kills not;
It works a constant change, which happy death
Can put no end to; deathwards progressing
To no death was that visage; it had past
The lily and the snow; and beyond these
I must not think now, though I saw that face.
But for her eyes I should have fled away; 240
They held me back with a benignant light,
Soft, mitigated by divinest lids
Half-clos'd, and visionless entire they seem'd
Of all external things; they saw me not,
But in blank splendour beam'd, like the mild
moon,

Who comforts those she sees not, who knows
not

What eyes are upward cast. As I had found
A grain of gold upon a mountain's side,
And, twing'd with avarice, strain'd out my
eyes

To search its sullen entrails rich with ore, 250
So, at the view of sad Moneta's brow,
I ask'd to see what things the hollow brow
Behind environ'd: what high tragedy
In the dark secret chambers of her skull
Was acting, that could give so dread a stress
To her cold lips, and fill with such a light
Her planetary eyes, and touch her voice
With such a sorrow? 'Shade of Memory!'
Cried I, with act adrant at her feet,
'By all the gloom hung round thy fallen
house, 260

By this last temple, by the golden age,
By great Apollo, thy dear foster-child,
And by thyself, forlorn divinity,
The pale Omega of a wither'd race,
Let me behold, according as thou saidst,
What in thy brain so ferments to and fro!'
No sooner had this conjuration past
My devout lips, than side by side we stood
(Like a stunt bramble by a solemn pine) 270
Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon and eve's one star.
Onward I look'd beneath the gloomy boughs,
And saw what first I thought an image huge,
Like to the image pedestall'd so high
In Saturn's temple; then Moneta's voice
Came brief upon mine ear. 'So Saturn sat
When he had lost his realms;' whereon there
grew

A power within me of enormous ken
To see as a god sees, and take the depth 280
Of things as nimbly as the outward eye
Can size and shape pervade. The lofty theme
Of those few words hung vast before my mind
With half-unravell'd web. I sat myself
Upon an eagle's watch, that I might see,
And seeing ne'er forget. No stir of life
Was in this shrouded vale, — not so much air
As in the zoning of a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass
But where the dead leaf fell there did it rest.
A stream went noiseless by, still deaden'd more
By reason of the fallen divinity 292
Spreading more shade; the Naiad 'mid her
reeds

Prest her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went
No further than to where old Saturn's feet

Had rested, and there slept how long a sleep!
Degraded, cold, upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsculpted, and his realmless eyes were closed
While his bowed head seem'd listening to th
Earth, 30
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from hi
place;
But there came one who, with a kindred hand
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not
Then came the griev'd voice Mnemosyne,
And griev'd I hearken'd. 'That divinity
Whom thou saw'st step from yon forlorn
wood, 30
And with slow pace approach our fallen king,
Is Thea, softest-natured of our brood.'
I mark'd the Goddess, in fair statuary
Surpassing wan Moneta by the head,
And in her sorrow nearer woman's tears.
There was a list'ning fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun;
As if the venom'd cloud of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its stored thunder labouring up,
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot 32
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain;
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his ear
Leaning, with parted lips some words she spok
In solemn tenour and deep organ-tone;
Some mourning words, which in our feebl
tongue
Would come in this like accenting; how frail
To that large utterance of the early gods!

'Saturn, look up! and for what, poor los
king? 33
I have no comfort for thee; no, not one;
I cannot say, wherefore thus sleepest thou?
For Heaven is parted from thee, and the Earth
Knows thee not, so afflicted, for a god.
The Ocean, too, with all its solemn noise,
Has from thy sceptre pass'd; and all the air
Is emptied of thy hoary majesty.
Thy thunder, captious at the new command,
Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
And thy sharp lightning, in unpractis'd hands,
Scourges and burns our once serene domain. 34

'With such remorseless speed still come nev
woes,
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
Saturn! sleep on: me thoughtless, why should

Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
 Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
 Saturn! sleep on, while at thy feet I weep.'

As when upon a tranced summer-night
 Forests, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
 Dream, and so dream all night without a noise,
 Save from one gradual solitary gust 351
 Swelling upon the silence, dying off,
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave,
 So came these words and went; the while in
 tears

She prest her fair large forehead to the earth,
 Just where her fallen hair might spread in
 curls,

A soft and silken net for Saturn's feet.
 Long, long these two were postured motionless,
 Like sculpture builded-up upon the grave
 Of their own power. A long awful time 360
 Look'd upon them: still they were the same;
 The frozen God still bending to the earth,
 And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet;
 Moneta silent. Without stay or prop
 But my own weak mortality, I bore
 The load of this eternal quietude,
 The unchanging gloom and the three fixed
 shapes

Ponderous upon my senses, a whole moon;
 For by my burning brain I measured sure
 Her silver seasons shedded on the night, 370
 And every day by day methought I grew
 More gaunt and ghostly. Oftentimes I pray'd
 Intense, that death would take me from the
 vale

And all its burthens; gasping with despair
 Of change, hour after hour I curs'd myself,
 Until old Saturn rais'd his faded eyes,
 And look'd around and saw his kingdom gone,
 And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
 And that fair kneeling Goddess at his feet.

As the moist scent of flowers, and grass, and
 leaves 380
 Fills forest-dells with a pervading air,
 Known to the woodland nostril, so the words
 Of Saturn fill'd the mossy glooms around,
 Even to the hollows of time-eaten oaks,
 And to the windings of the foxes' hole,
 With sad, low tones, while thus he spoke, and
 sent

Strange moanings to the solitary Pan.
 'Moan, brethren, moan, for we are swallow'd
 up

And buried from all godlike exercise
 Of influence benign on planets pale, 390
 And peaceful sway upon man's harvesting,
 And all those acts which Deity supreme

Doth ease its heart of love in. Moan and wail;
 Moan, brethren, moan; for lo, the rebel spheres
 Spin round; the stars their ancient courses
 keep;

Clouds still with shadowy moisture haunt the
 earth,

Still suck their fill of light from sun and moon;
 Still buds the tree, and still the seashores mur-
 mur;

There is no death in all the universe,
 No smell of death.—There shall be death.
 Moan, moan; 400

Moan, Cybele, moan; for thy pernicious babes
 Have chang'd a god into an aching palsy.

Moan, brethren, moan, for I have no strength
 left;

Weak as the reed, weak, feeble as my voice.
 Oh! Oh! the pain, the pain of feebleness;
 Moan, moan, for still I thaw; or give me help,
 Throw down those imps, and give me victory.
 Let me hear other groans, and trumpets blown
 Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival,
 From the gold peaks of heaven's high-piled
 clouds; 410

Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
 Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be
 Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
 Of the sky-children.' So he feebly ceased,
 With such a poor and sickly-sounding pause,
 Methought I heard some old man of the earth
 Bewailing earthly loss; nor could my eyes
 And ears act with that unison of sense
 Which marries sweet sound with the grace of
 form,

And dolorous accent from a tragic harp 420
 With large limb'd visions. More I scrutinized.
 Still fixt he sat beneath the sable trees,
 Whose arms spread straggling in wild serpent
 forms,
 With leaves all hush'd; his awful presence
 there

(Now all was silent) gave a deadly lie
 To what I erewhile heard: only his lips
 Trembled amid the white curls of his beard;
 They told the truth, though round the snowy
 locks

Hung nobly, as upon the face of heaven
 A mid-day fleece of clouds. Thea arose 430
 And stretcht her white arm through the hol-
 low dark,

Pointing somewhither: whereat he too rose,
 Like a vast giant, seen by men at sea
 To grow pale from the waves at dull mid-
 night.

They melted from my sight into the woods;
 Ere I could turn, Moneta cried, 'These twain
 Are speeding to the families of grief,

Where, rooft in by black rocks, they waste in pain
 And darkness, for no hope.' And she spake on,
 As ye may read who can unwearied pass 440
 Onward from the antechamber of this dream,
 Where, even at the open doors, awhile
 I must delay, and glean my memory
 Of her high phrase — perhaps no further dare.

CANTO II

'Mortal, that thou may'st understand aright,
 I humanize my sayings to thine ear,
 Making comparisons of earthly things;
 Or thou might'st better listen to the wind,
 Whose language is to thee a barren noise,
 Though it blows legend-laden thro' the trees.
 In melancholy realms big tears are shed,
 More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
 Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe.
 The Titans fierce, self-hid or prison-bound, 10
 Groan for the old allegiance once more,
 Listening in their doom for Saturn's voice.
 But one of the whole eagle-brood still keeps
 His sovereignty, and rule, and majesty:
 Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire
 Still sits, still snuffs the incense teeming up
 From Man to the Sun's God — yet insecure.
 For as upon the earth dire prodigies
 Fright and perplex, so also shudders he;
 Not at dog's howl or gloom-bird's hated screech,
 Or the familiar visiting of one 21
 Upon the first toll of his passing bell,
 Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;
 But horrors, portioned to a giant nerve,
 Make great Hyperion ache. His palace bright,
 Bastion'd with pyramids of shining gold,
 And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
 Glares a blood-red thro' all the thousand courts,
 Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;
 And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds 30
 Flash angerly; when he would taste the wreaths
 Of incense breath'd aloft from sacred hills,
 Instead of sweets, his ample palate takes
 Savour of poisonous brass and metals sick;
 Wherefore when harbour'd in the sleepy West,
 After the full completion of fair day,
 For rest divine upon exalted couch,
 And slumber in the arms of melody,
 He paces through the pleasant hours of ease,
 With strides colossal, on from hall to hall, 40
 While far within each aisle and deep recess
 His winged minions in close clusters stand
 Amaz'd, and full of fear; like anxious men,
 Who on a wide plain gather in sad troops,

When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.

Even now where Saturn, rous'd from icy trance
 Goes step for step with Thea from yon woods,
 Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
 Is sloping to the threshold of the West.
 Thither we tend.' Now in clear light I stood
 Reliev'd from the dusk vale. Mnemosyne
 Was sitting on a square-edg'd polish'd stone,
 That in its lucid depths reflected pure
 Her priestess' garments. My quick eyes ran o
 From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault
 Through bow'rs of fragrant and enwreath
 light,
 And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades.
 Anon rush'd by the bright Hyperion;
 His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels
 And gave a roar as if of earthy fire,
 That scar'd away the meek ethereal hours,
 And made their dove-wings tremble. On h
 flared.

II. FRAGMENTS

The three fragments that follow are published in *Life, Letters and Literary Remains* without date.

I

WHERE 's the Poet? Show him! show him,
 Muses nine! that I may know him!
 'T is the man who with a man
 Is an equal, be he King,
 Or poorest of the beggar-clan,
 Or any other wondrous thing
 A man may be 'twixt ape and Plato;
 'T is the man who with a bird,
 Wren, or Eagle, finds his way to
 All its instincts; he hath heard
 The Lion's roaring, and can tell
 What his horny throat expresseth,
 And to him the Tiger's yell
 Comes articulate and presseth
 On his ear like mother-tongue.

II

MODERN LOVE

AND what is love? It is a doll dress'd up
 For idleness to cosset, nurse, and dandle;
 A thing of soft misnomers, so divine
 That silly youth doth think to make itself
 Divine by loving, and so goes on
 Yawning and doting a whole summer long,
 Till Miss's comb is made a pearl tiara,

And common Wellingtons turn Romeo boots ;
 Then Cleopatra lives at number seven,
 And Antony resides in Brunswick Square.
 Fools ! if some passions high have warm'd the
 world,
 If Queens and Soldiers have play'd deep for
 hearts,
 It is no reason why such agonies
 Should be more common than the growth of
 weeds.
 Fools ! make me whole again that weighty
 pearl
 The Queen of Egypt melted, and I'll say
 That ye may love in spite of beaver hats.

III

FRAGMENT OF 'THE CASTLE BUILDER'

TO-NIGHT I'll have my friar — let me think
 About my room — I'll have it in the pink ;
 It should be rich and sombre, and the moon,
 Just in its mid-life in the midst of June,
 Should look thro' four large windows and dis-
 play

Clear, but for gold-fish vases in the way,
 Their glassy diamonding on Turkish floor ;
 The tapers keep aside, an hour and more,
 To see what else the moon alone can show ;
 While the night-breeze doth softly let us know
 My terrace is well bower'd with oranges.
 Upon the floor the dullest spirit sees
 A guitar-ribband and a lady's glove
 Beside a crumple-leaved tale of love ;
 A tambour-frame, with Venus sleeping there,
 All finish'd but some ringlets of her hair ;
 A viol, bow-strings torn, cross-wise upon
 A glorious folio of Anacreon ;
 A skull upon a mat of roses lying,
 Ink'd purple with a song concerning dying ;
 An hour-glass on the turn, amid the trails
 Of passion-flower ; — just in time there sails
 A cloud across the moon, — the lights bring
 in !

And see what more my phantasy can win.
 It is a gorgeous room, but somewhat sad ;
 The draperies are so, as tho' they had
 Been made for Cleopatra's winding-sheet ;
 And opposite the stedfast eye doth meet
 A spacious looking-glass, upon whose face,
 In letters raven-sombre, you may trace
 Old ' Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin.'
 Greek busts and statuary have ever been
 Held, by the finest spirits, fitter far,
 Than vase grotesque and Siamesian jar ;
 Therefore 't is sure a want of Attic taste

That I should rather love a Gothic waste
 Of eyesight on cinque-coloured potter's clay,
 Than on the marble fairness of old Greece.
 My table-coverlits of Jason's fleece
 And black Numidian sheep-wool should be
 wrought,
 Gold, black, and heavy, from the Lama brought.
 My ebon sofas should delicious be
 With down from Leda's cygnet progeny.
 My pictures all Salvator's, save a few
 Of Titian's portraiture, and one, though new,
 Of Haydon's in its fresh magnificence.
 My wine — O good ! 't is here at my desire,
 And I must sit to supper with my friar.

.

IV

EXTRACTS FROM AN OPERA

First given in *Life, Letters and Literary Re-
 mains*, and there dated 1818. In that case, it is
 most likely that the verses formed a portion of
 some experiment going on to the autumn after
 Keats's return from his northern journey.

O ! WERE I one of the Olympian twelve,
 Their godships should pass this into a law, —
 That when a man doth set himself in toil
 After some beauty veiled far away,
 Each step he took should make his lady's
 hand
 More soft, more white, and her fair cheek more
 fair ;
 And for each briar-berry he might eat,
 A kiss should bud upon the tree of love,
 And pulp and ripen richer every hour,
 To melt away upon the traveller's lips.

.

DAISY'S SONG

THE sun, with his great eye,
 Sees not so much as I ;
 And the moon, all silver-prond,
 Might as well be in a cloud.

And O the spring — the spring !
 I lead the life of a King !
 Couch'd in the teeming grass,
 I spy each pretty lass.

I look where no one dares,
 And I stare where no one stares,
 And when the night is nigh,
 Lambs bleat my lullaby.

.

FOLLY'S SONG

WHEN wedding fiddles are a-playing,
Huzza for folly O!

And when maidens go a-Maying,
Huzza, etc.

When a milk-pail is upset,
Huzza, etc.

And the clothes left in the wet,
Huzza, etc.

When the barrel 's set abroach,
Huzza, etc.

When Kate Eyebrow keeps a coach,
Huzza, etc.

When the pig is over-roasted,
Huzza, etc.

And the cheese is over-toasted,
Huzza, etc.

When Sir Snap is with his lawyer,
Huzza, etc.

And Miss Chip has kiss'd the sawyer;
Huzza, etc.

.

OH, I am frighten'd with most hateful thoughts!
Perhaps her voice is not a nightingale's,
Perhaps her teeth are not the fairest pearl;
Her eye-lashes may be, for aught I know,
Not longer than the May-fly's small fan-
horns;

There may not be one dimple on her hand;
And freckles many; ah! a careless nurse,
In haste to teach the little thing to walk,
May have crumpt up a pair of Dian's legs,
And warpt the ivory of a Juno's neck.

.

SONG

THE stranger lighted from his steed,
And ere he spake a word,
He seiz'd my lady's lily hand,
And kiss'd it all unheard.

The stranger walk'd into the hall,
And ere he spake a word,
He kiss'd my lady's cherry lips,
And kiss'd 'em all unheard.

The stranger walk'd into the bower, —
But my lady first did go, —
Ay hand in hand into the bower,
Where my lord's roses blow.

My lady's maid had a silken scarf,
And a golden ring had she,

And a kiss from the stranger, as off he went
Again on his palfrey.

.

ASLEEP! O sleep a little while, white pearl!
And let me kneel, and let me pray to thee,
And let me call Heaven's blessing on thine
eyes,

And let me breathe into the happy air,
That doth enfold and touch thee all about,
Vows of my slavery, my giving up,
My sudden adoration, my great love!

III. FAMILIAR VERSES

STANZAS TO MISS WYLIE

These verses belong to 1816. It is not im-
possible that like the valentine on p. 11, they
were written for the use of George Keats.

O COME, Georgiana! the rose is full blown,
The riches of Flora are lavishly strown,
The air is all softness, and crystal the streams;
The West is resplendently clothed in beams.

O come! let us haste to the freshening shades,
The quaintly carv'd seats, and the opening
glades;
Where the faeries are chanting their evening
hymns,
And the last sun-beam the sylph lightly swims.

And when thou art weary, I'll find thee a bed
Of mosses and flowers to pillow thy head:
And there Georgiana I'll sit at thy feet,
While my story of love I enraptur'd repeat.

So fondly I'll breathe, and so softly I'll sigh,
Thou wilt think that some amorous zephyr is
nigh;
Yet no — as I breathe I will press thy fair knee,
And then thou wilt know that the sigh comes
from me.

Ah! why, dearest girl, should we lose all these
blisses?
That mortal's a fool who such happiness misses:
So smile acquiescence, and give me thy hand,
With love-looking eyes, and with voice sweetly
bland.

EPISTLE TO JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS

'My dear Reynolds,' writes Keats from
Teignmouth, March 25, 1818, 'In hopes of
cheering you through a minute or two, I was

determined, will he, nill he, to send you some lines, so you will excuse the unconnected subject and careless verse. You know, I am sure, Claude's Enchanted Castle, and I wish you may be pleased with my remembrance of it.'

DEAR Reynolds! As last night I lay in bed, There came before my eyes that wonted thread Of shapes, and shadows, and remembrances, That every other minute vex and please: Things all disjointed come from north and south, —

Two Witch's eyes above a Cherub's mouth, Voltaire with casque and shield and habergeon, And Alexander with his nightcap on; Old Socrates a-tying his cravat, And Hazlitt playing with Miss Edgeworth's cat; 10

And Junius Brutus, pretty well so so, Making the best of 's way towards Soho.

Few are there who escape these visitings, — Perhaps one or two whose lives have patent wings,

And thro' whose curtains peeps no hellish nose, No wild-boar tusches, and no Mermaid's toes; But flowers bursting out with lusty pride, And young Æolian harps personify'd; Some Titian colours touch'd into real life, — The sacrifice goes on; the pontiff knife 20 Gleams in the Sun, the milk-white heifer lows, The pipes go shrilly, the libation flows: A white sail shows above the green-head cliff, Moves round the point, and throws her anchor stiff;

The mariners join hymn with those on land.

You know the Enchanted Castle, — it doth stand

Upon a rock, on the border of a Lake, Nested in trees, which all do seem to shake From some old magic-like Urganda's sword. O Phœbus! that I had thy sacred word 30 To show this Castle, in fair dreaming wise, Unto my friend, while sick and ill he lies!

You know it well enough, where it doth seem A mossy place, a Merlin's Hall, a dream; You know the clear Lake, and the little Isles, The mountains blue, and cold near neighbour rills,

All which elsewhere are but half animate; There do they look alive to love and hate, To smiles and frowns; they seem a lifted mound

Above some giant, pulsing underground. 40

Part of the building was a chosen See, Built by a banish'd Santon of Chaldee; The other part, two thousand years from him, Was built by Cuthbert de Saint Aldebrim; Then there's a little wing, far from the Sun, Built by a Lapland Witch turn'd maudlin Nun; And many other juts of aged stone Founded with many a mason-devil's groan.

The doors all look as if they op'd themselves: The windows as if latch'd by Fays and Elves,⁵⁰ And from them comes a silver flash of light, As from the westward of a Summer's night; Or like a beauteous woman's large blue eyes Gone mad through olden songs and poesies.

See! what is coming from the distance dim! A golden Galley all in silken trim! Three rows of oars are lightening, moment whiles

Into the verd'rous bosoms of those isles; Towards the shade, under the Castle wall, It comes in silence, — now 't is hidden all. 60 The Clarion sounds, and from a Postern-gate An echo of sweet music doth create A fear in the poor Herdsman who doth bring His beasts to trouble the enchanted spring, — He tells of the sweet music, and the spot, To all his friends, and they believe him not.

O that our dreamings all, of sleep or wake, Would all their colours from the sunset take: From something of material sublime, 69 Rather than shadow our own soul's day-time In the dark void of night. For in the world We jostle, — but my flag is not unfurl'd On the Admiral-staff, — and so philosophise I dare not yet! O, never will the prize, High reason, and the love of good and ill, Be my award! Things cannot to the will Be settled, but they tease us out of thought; Or is it imagination brought Beyond its proper bound, yet still confin'd, 80 Lost in a sort of Purgatory blind, Cannot refer to any standard law Of either earth or heaven? It is a flaw In happiness, to see beyond our bourn. — It forces us in summer skies to mourn, It spoils the singing of the Nightingale.

Dear Reynolds! I have a mysterious tale, And cannot speak it: the first page I read Upon a Lampit rock of green sea-weed Among the breakers; 't was a quiet eve, The rocks were silent, the wide sea did weave An untumultuous fringe of silver foam 90 Along the flat brown sand; I was at home

And should have been most happy, — but I saw
 Too far into the sea, where every maw
 The greater on the less feeds evermore. —
 But I saw too distinct into the core
 Of an eternal fierce destruction,
 And so from happiness I far was gone.
 Still am I sick of it, and tho' to-day,
 I've gather'd young spring-leaves, and flowers
 gay 100

Of periwinkle and wild strawberry,
 Still do I that most fierce destruction see, —
 The Shark at savage prey, — the Hawk at
 pounce, —

The gentle Robin, like a Pard or Ounce,
 Ravening a worm, — Away, ye horrid moods!
 Moods of one's mind! You know I hate them
 well.

You know I'd sooner be a clapping Bell
 To some Kamschatkan Missionary Church,
 Than with these horrid moods be left i' the
 lurch.

A DRAUGHT OF SUNSHINE

Sent in a letter to Reynolds, dated January
 31, 1818. 'I cannot write in prose,' says Keats;
 'it is a sunshiny day and I cannot, so here
 goes.'

HENCE Burgundy, Claret, and Port,
 Away with old Hock and Madeira,
 Too earthly ye are for my sport;
 There's a beverage brighter and clearer.

Instead of a pitiful rummer,
 My wine overbrims a whole summer;

My bowl is the sky,

And I drink at my eye,

Till I feel in the brain

A Delphian pain —

Then follow, my Caius! then follow:

On the green of the hill

We will drink our fill

Of golden sunshine,

Till our brains intertwine

With the glory and grace of Apollo!

God of the Meridian,

And of the East and West,

To thee my soul is flown,

And my body is earthward press'd. —

It is an awful mission,

A terrible division;

And leaves a gulf austere

To be fill'd with worldly fear.

Aye, when the soul is fled

To high above our head,

Affrighted do we gaze

After its airy maze,

As doth a mother wild,
 When her young infant child
 Is in an eagle's claws —
 And is not this the cause
 Of madness? — God of Song,
 Thou bearest me along
 Through sights I scarce can bear:
 O let me, let me share
 With the hot lyre and thee,
 The staid Philosophy.
 Temper my lonely hours,
 And let me see thy bowers
 More unalarm'd!

AT TEIGNMOUTH

Sent as part of a letter to Haydon, written
 from Teignmouth, March 21, 1818. 'I have
 enjoyed the most delightful walks these three
 fine days beautiful enough to make me content
 here all the summer could I stay.'

HERE all the summer could I stay,
 For there's Bishop's teign
 And King's teign
 And Coomb at the clear teign head —
 Where close by the stream
 You may have your cream
 All spread upon barley bread.

There's arch Brook
 And there's larch Brook
 Both turning many a mill;
 And cooling the drouth
 Of the salmon's mouth
 And fattening his silver gill.

There is Wild wood,
 A Mild hood
 To the sheep on the lea o' the down,
 Where the golden furze
 With its green, thin spurs,
 Doth catch at the maiden's gown.

There is Newton marsh
 With its spear grass harsh —
 A pleasant summer level
 Where the maidens sweet
 Of the Market Street,
 Do meet in the dusk to revel.

There's the Barton rich
 With dyke and ditch
 And hedge for the thrush to live in;
 And the hollow tree
 For the buzzing bee,
 And a bank for the wasp to hive in.

And O, and O
 The daisies blow
 And the primroses are waken'd,
 And the violets white
 Sit in silver plight,
 And the green bud 's as long as the spike end.

Then who would go
 Into dark Soho,
 And chatter with dack'd hair'd critics,
 When he can stay
 For the new-mown hay,
 And startle the dappled Prickets?

THE DEVON MAID

Immediately after the preceding, Keats adds: 'I know not if this rhyming fit has done anything—it will be safe with you if worthy to put among my Lyrics. Here 's some dog-grel for you,' and these four stanzas follow.

WHERE be ye going, you Devon Maid?
 And what have ye there in the Basket?
 Ye tight little fairy just fresh from the dairy,
 Will ye give me some cream if I ask it?

I love your Meads, and I love your flowers,
 And I love your junkets mainly,
 But 'hind the door I love kissing more,
 O look not so disdainly.

I love your hills, and I love your dales,
 And I love your flocks a-bleating—
 But O, on the heather to lie together,
 With both our hearts a-beating!

I'll put your Basket all safe in a nook,
 Your shawl I hang up on the willow,
 And we will sigh in the daisy's eye
 And kiss on a grass green pillow.

ACROSTIC:

GEORGIANA AUGUSTA KEATS

This is dated 'Foot of Helvellyn, June 27,' 1818, and was sent, as something overlooked, to his brother and sister, September 18, 1819. 'I wrote it in a great hurry which you will see. Indeed I would not copy it if I thought it would ever be seen by any but yourselves.'

GIVE me your patience, sister, while I frame
 Exact in capitals your golden name;
 Or sue the fair Apollo and he will
 Rouse from his heavy slumber and instill

Great love in me for thee and Poesy.
 Imagine not that greatest mastery
 And kingdom over all the Realms of verse,
 Nears more to heaven in aught, than when we
 nurse

And surely give to love and Brotherhood.

Anthropophagi in Othello's mood;
 Ulysses storm'd and his enchanted belt
 Glow with the Muse, but they are never felt
 Unbosom'd so and so eternal made,
 Such tender incense in their laurel shade
 To all the regent sisters of the Nine
 As this poor offering to you, sister mine.

Kind sister! ay, this third name says you are;
 Enchanted has it been the Lord knows where;
 And may it taste to you like good old wine,
 Take you to real happiness and give
 Sons, daughters and a home like honied hive.

MEG MERRILIES

Sent in a letter to Fanny Keats, written from Auchencairn, July 2, 1818. 'We are in the midst of Meg Merrilies country of whom I suppose you have heard.' Fanny Keats was a girl of fifteen at this time.

OLD Meg she was a Gipsy,
 And liv'd upon the Moors:
 Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
 And her house was out of doors.

Her apples were swart blackberries,
 Her currants pods o' broom;
 Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
 Her book a churchyard tomb.

Her Brothers were the craggy hills,
 Her Sisters larchen trees—
 Alone with her great family
 She liv'd as she did please.

No breakfast had she many a morn,
 No dinner many a noon,
 And 'stead of supper she would stare
 Full hard against the Moon.

But every morn of woodbine fresh
 She made her garlanding,
 And every night the dark glen Yew
 She wove, and she would sing.

And with her fingers old and brown
 She plaited Mats o' Rushes,

And gave them to the Cottagers
She met among the Bushes,

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen
And tall as Amazon :
An old red blanket cloak she wore ;
A chip hat had she on.
God rest her aged bones somewhere —
She died full long ago !

A SONG ABOUT MYSELF

'I have so many interruptions,' writes Keats to his sister Fanny from Kircudbright, July 2, 1818, 'that I cannot manage to fill a Letter in one day — since I scribbled the song [Meg Merrilies] we have walked through a beautiful country to Kircudbright — at which place I will write you a song about myself.'

THERE was a naughty Boy,
A naughty boy was he,
He would not stop at home,
He could not quiet be —
He took
In his Knapsack
A Book
Full of vowels ;
And a shirt
With some towels —
A slight cap
For night cap —
A hair brush,
Comb ditto,
New Stockings,
For old ones
Would split O !
This Knapsack,
Tight at 's back,
He rivetted close
And follow'd his Nose
To the North,
To the North,
And follow'd his nose
To the North.

There was a naughty boy
And a naughty boy was he,
For nothing would he do
But scribble poetry —
He took
An inkstand
In his hand,
And a Pen
Big as ten
In the other,

And away
In a Pother
He ran
To the mountains,
And fountains
And ghoses,
And Postes,
And witches,
And ditches,
And wrote
In his coat,
When the weather
Was cool,
Fear of gout,
And without
When the weather
Was Warm —
Och the charm
When we choose
To follow one's nose
To the north,
To the north,
To follow one's nose
To the north.

There was a naughty boy
And a naughty boy was he,
He kept little fishes
In washing tubs three
In spite
Of the might
Of the Maid,
Nor afraid
Of his Granny — good —
He often would,
Hurly burly,
Get up early,
And go
By hook or crook
To the brook,
And bring home
Miller's thumb,
Tittlebat
Not over fat,
Minnows small
As the stall
Of a glove,
Not above
The size
Of a nice
Little Baby's
Little fingers —
O, he made,
'T was his trade,
Of Fish a pretty Kettle
A Kettle —
A Kettle

Of Fish, a pretty Kettle,
A Kettle!

There was a naughty Boy,
And a naughty Boy was he,
He ran away to Scotland
The people for to see —
Then he found
That the ground
Was as hard,
That a yard
Was as long,
That a song
Was as merry,
That a cherry
Was as red —
That lead
Was as weighty,
That fourscore
Was as eighty,
That a door
Was as wooden
As in England —
So he stood in his shoes
And he wonder'd,
He wonder'd,
He stood in his shoes
And he wonder'd.

TO THOMAS KEATS

BELANTREE (for Ballantrae) July 10 [1818.]

AH! ken ye what I met the day
Out oore the Mountains
A coming down by craggies gray
An mossie fountains —
Ah goud-hair'd Marie yeve I pray
Ane minute's guessing —
For that I met upon the way
Is past expressing.
As I stood where a rocky brig
A torrent crosses
I spied upon a misty rig
A troup o' Horses —
And as they trotted down the glen
I sped to meet them
To see if I might know the Men
To stop and greet them.
First Willie on his sleek mare came
At canting gallop
His long hair rustled like a flame
On board a shallop,
Then came his brother Rab and then
Young Peggy's Mither
And Peggy too — adown the glen
They went together —

I saw her wrappit in her hood
Frae wind and raining —
Her cheek was flush wi' timid blood
Twixt growth and waning —
She turn'd her dazed eyes full oft
For there her Brithers
Came riding with her Bridegroom soft
And mony ithers.
Young Tam came up and eyed me quick
With reddened cheek —
Braw Tom was daffed like a chick —
He couldna speak —
Ah, Marie, they are all gane hame
Through blustering weather
An' every heart is full on flame
An' light as feather.
Ah! Marie, they are all gone hame
Frae happy wadding,
Whilst I — Ah is it not a shame?
Sad tears am shedding.

THE GADFLY

Inclosed in a letter to Tom Keats, July 17,
1818.

ALL gentle folks who owe a grudge
To any living thing
Open your ears and stay your t(r)udge
Whilst I in dudgeon sing.

The Gadfly he hath stung me sore —
O may he ne'er sting you!
But we have many a horrid bore, —
He may sting black and blue.

Has any here an old gray Mare
With three legs all her store,
O put it to her Buttocks bare
And straight she'll run on four.

Has any here a Lawyer suit
Of 1743,
Take Lawyer's nose and put it to 't
And you the end will see.

Is there a Man in Parliament
Dum(b)founder'd in his speech,
O let his neighbour make a rent
And put one in his breech.

O Lowther how much better thou
Hadst figur'd t' other day
When to the folks thou mad'st a bow
And hadst no more to say.

If lucky Gadfly had but ta'en
His seat . . .

And put thee to a little pain
To save thee from a worse.

Better than Southey it had been,
Better than Mr. D——
Better than Wordsworth, too, I ween,
Better than Mr. V——.

Forgive me, pray, good people all,
For deviating so —
In spirit sure I had a call —
And now I on will go.

Has any here a daughter fair
Too fond of reading novels,
Too apt to fall in love with care
And charming Mister Lovels,

O put a Gadfly to that thing
She keeps so white and pert —
I mean the finger for the ring,
And it will breed a wort.

Has any here a pious spouse
Who seven times a day
Scolds as King David pray'd, to chouse
And have her holy way —

O let a Gadfly's little sting
Persuade her sacred tongue
That noises are a common thing,
But that her bell has rung.

And as this is the summum bonum
Of all conquering,
I leave 'withouten wordes mo'
The Gadfly's little sting.

ON HEARING THE BAG-PIPE AND SEEING
'THE STRANGER' PLAYED AT INVERARY

'On entering Inverary,' Keats writes to his brother Tom, July 18, 1818, 'we saw a Play Bill. Brown was knocked up from new shoes — so I went to the Barn alone where I saw the Stranger accompanied by a Bag-pipe. There they went on about interesting creators and human nater till the Curtain fell and then came the Bag-pipe. When Mrs. Haller fainted down went the Curtain and out came the Bag-pipe — at the heartrending, shoemending reconciliation the Piper blew amain. I never read or saw this play before; not the Bag-pipe nor the wretched players themselves were little in

comparison with it — thank heaven it has been scoffed at lately almost to a fashion.'

Of late two dainties were before me plac'd
Sweet, holy, pure, sacred and innocent,
From the ninth sphere to me benignly sent
That Gods might know my own particula
taste:
First the soft Bag-pipe mourn'd with zealous
haste,
The Stranger next with head on bosom bent
Sigh'd; rueful again the piteous Bag-pipe
went,
Again the Stranger sighings fresh did waste.
O Bag-pipe, thou didst steal my heart away —
O Stranger, thou my nerves from Pipe didst
charm —
O Bag-pipe thou didst re-assert thy sway —
Again thou, Stranger, gav'st me fresh alarm —
Alas! I could not choose. Ah! my poor heart
Mum chance art thou with both oblig'd to part.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE HIGHLANDS AFTER
A VISIT TO BURNS'S COUNTRY

In a letter to Benjamin Bailey from the
Island of Mull, July 22, 1818.

THERE is a charm in footing slow across a silent
plain,
Where patriot battle has been fought, where
glory had the gain;
There is a pleasure on the heath where Druids
old have been,
Where mantles gray have rustled by and swept
the nettles green;
There is Joy in every spot made known by
times of old,
New to the feet, although each tale a hundred
times be told;
There is a deeper Joy than all, more solemn in
the heart,
More parching to the tongue than all, of more
divine a smart,
When weary steps forget themselves upon a
pleasant turf,
Upon hot sand, or flinty road, or sea-shore iron
scurf,
Toward the Castle or the Cot, where long ago
was born
One who was great through mortal days, and
died of fame unshorn.
Light heather-bells may tremble then, but they
are far away;
Wood-lark may sing from sandy fern, — the
Sun may hear his Lay;

Runnels may kiss the grass on shelves and shallows clear,
 But their low voices are not heard, though come on travels drear ;
 Blood-red the sun may set behind black mountain peaks ;
 Blue tides may sluice and drench their time in Caves and weedy creeks ;
 Eagles may seem to sleep wing-wide upon the Air ;
 Ring-doves may fly convuls'd across to some high-cedar'd lair ;
 But the forgotten eye is still fast lidded to the ground,
 As Palmer's, that with weariness, mid-desert shrine hath found.

At such a time the soul's a child, in childhood is the brain ;
 Forgotten is the worldly heart — alone, it beats in vain. —
 Aye, if a Madman could have leave to pass a healthful day
 To tell his forehead's swoon and faint when first began decay,
 He might make tremble many a one whose spirit had gone forth
 To find a Bard's low cradle-place about the silent North.
 Scanty the hour and few the steps beyond the bourn of Care,
 Beyond the sweet and bitter world, — beyond it unaware !
 Scanty the hour and few the steps, because a longer stay
 Would bar return, and make a man forget his mortal way :
 O horrible ! to lose the sight of well remember'd face,
 Of Brother's eyes, of Sister's brow — constant to every place ;
 Filling the Air, as on we move, with Portraiture intense ;
 More warm than those heroic tints that pain a Painter's sense,
 When shapes of old come striding by, and visages of old,
 Locks shining black, hair scanty gray, and passions manifold.
 No, no, that horror cannot be, for at the cable's length
 Man feels the gentle anchor pull and gladdens in its strength : —
 One hour, half-idiot, he stands by mossy waterfall,
 But in the very next he reads his soul's Memorial : —

He reads it on the mountain's height, where chance he may sit down
 Upon rough marble diadem — that hill's eternal Crown.
 Yet be his Anchor e'er so fast, room is there for a prayer
 That man may never lose his Mind on Mountains black and bare ;
 That he may stray league after league some great birthplace to find
 And keep his vision clear from speck, his inward sight unblind.

MRS. CAMERON AND BEN NEVIS

In his letter to Tom Keats, August 3, 1818, which contains the sonnet written on Ben Nevis, Keats concludes a lively account of the ascent they made with this bit of nonsense : —

After all there was one Mrs. Cameron of 50 years of age and the fattest woman in all Inverness-shire who got up this Mountain some few years ago — true she had her servants — but then she had herself. She ought to have hired Sisyphus, — “Up the high hill he heaves a huge round — Mrs. Cameron.” 'Tis said a little conversation took place between the mountain and the Lady. After taking a glass of Whisky as she was tolerably seated at ease she thus began —

MRS. C.

UPON my life Sir Nevis I am piqued
 That I have so far panted tugg'd and reek'd
 To do an honor to your old bald pate
 And now am sitting on you just to bait,
 Without your paying me one compliment.
 Alas, 'tis so with all, when our intent
 Is plain, and in the eye of all Mankind
 We fair ones show a preference, too blind !
 You Gentle man immediately turn tail —
 O let me then my hapless fate bewail !
 Ungrateful Baldpate have I not disdain'd
 The pleasant Valleys — have I not madbrain'd
 Deserted all my Pickles and preserves
 My China closet too — with wretched Nerves
 To boot — say, wretched ingrate, have I not
 Left my soft cushion chair and candle pot ?
 'Tis true I had no corns — no ! thank the fates
 My Shoemaker was always Mr. Bates.
 And if not Mr. Bates why I'm not old !
 Still dumb ungrateful Nevis — still so cold !

Here the Lady took some more whisky and
was putting even more to her lips when she
dashed it to the Ground, for the Mountain be-
gan to grumble — which continued for a few
minutes before he thus began —

BEN NEVIS.

What whining bit of tongue and Mouth thus
dares

Disturb my slumber of a thousand years?
Even so long my sleep has been secure —
And to be so awak'd I 'll not endure.
Oh pain — for since the Eagle's earliest scream
I've had a damn'd confounded ugly dream,
A Nightmare sure. What! Madam, was it
you?

It cannot be! My old eyes are not true!
Red-Crag, my Spectacles! Now let me see!
Good Heavens! Lady, how the gemini
Did you get here? O, I shall split my sides!
I shall earthquake —

MRS. C.

Sweet Nevis do not quake, for though I love
Your honest Countenance all things above,
Truly I should not like to be convey'd
So far into your Bosom — gentle Maid
Loves not too rough a treatment, gentle Sir —
Pray thee be calm and do not quake nor stir
No, not a Stone, or I shall go in fits —

BEN NEVIS.

I must — I shall — I meet not such tit bits —
I meet not such sweet creatures every day —
By my old nightcap night and day
I must have one sweet Buss — I must and shall!
Red Crag! — What! Madam, can you then re-
pent

Of all the toil and vigour you have spent
To see Ben Nevis and to touch his nose?
Red Crag I say! O I must have them close!
Red Crag, there lies beneath my farthest toe
A vein of Sulphur — go, dear Red Crag, go —
And rub your flinty back against it — budge!
Dear Madam, I must kiss you, faith I must!
I must embrace you with my dearest gust!
Block-head, d'ye hear! — Block-head, I 'll
make her feel.

There lies beneath my east leg's northern heel
A cave of young earth dragons; — well my
boy

Go thither quick and so complete my joy.
Take you a bundle of the largest pines,
And when the sun on fiercest Phosphor shines,
Fire them and ram them in the Dragon's nest,
Then will the dragons fry and fizz their best

Until ten thousand now no bigger than
Poor Alligators — poor things of one span —
Will each one swell to twice ten times the
size

Of northern whale — then for the tender prize —
The moment then — for then will Red Crag rub
His flinty back — and I shall kiss and snub
And press my dainty morsel to my breast.
Block-head make haste!

O Muses, weep the rest —
The Lady fainted and he thought her dead;
So pulled the clouds again about his head
And went to sleep again; soon she was rous'd
By her affrighted servants — next day, hous'd
Safe on the lowly ground she bless'd her fate
That fainting fit was not delayed too late.

But what surprised me above all is how
the lady got down again. I felt it horribly.
'T was the most vile descent — shook me all
to pieces.

SHARING EVE'S APPLE

Printed by Mr. Forman and assigned to 1818.
Mr. Forman does not give his authority, save
to say that the verses have been handed about
in manuscript.

O BLUSH not so! O blush not so!
Or I shall think you knowing;
And if you smile the blushing while,
Then maidenheads are going.

There's a blush for won't, and a blush for
shan't,
And a blush for having done it:
There's a blush for thought and a blush for
nought,
And a blush for just begun it.

O sigh not so! O sigh not so!
For it sounds of Eve's sweet pippin;
By these loosen'd lips you have tasted the pips
And fought in an amorous nipping.

Will you play once more at nice-cut-core,
For it only will last our youth out,
And we have the prime of the kissing time,
We have not one sweet tooth out.

There's a sigh for yes, and a sigh for no,
And a sigh for I can't bear it!
O what can be done, shall we stay or run?
O cut the sweet apple and share it!

A PROPHECY :

TO GEORGE KEATS IN AMERICA

In a letter to his brother and his wife, October 24, 1818, Keats says : ' If I had a prayer to make for any great good, next to Tom's recovery, it should be that one of your children should be the first American Poet. I have a great mind to make a prophecy, and they say prophecies work on their own fulfilment.'

'T is the witching time of night,
Orbed is the moon and bright,
And the Stars they glisten, glisten,
Seeming with bright eyes to listen.
For what listen they ?
For a song and for a charm,
See they glisten in alarm,
And the Moon is waxing warm
To hear what I shall say.
Moon ! keep wide thy golden ears —
Hearken, Stars ! and hearken, Spheres ! —
Hearken, thou eternal Sky !
I sing an infant's Lullaby,
O pretty lullaby !
Listen, listen, listen, listen,
Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten,
And hear my Lullaby !
Though the Rushes, that will make
Its cradle, still are in the lake —
Though the linen that will be
Its swathe, is on the cotton tree —
Though the woollen that will keep
It warm, is on the silly sheep —
Listen, Starlight, listen, listen,
Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten,
And hear my lullaby !
Child, I see thee ! Child, I've found thee
Midst of the quiet all around thee !
Child, I see thee ! Child, I spy thee !
And thy mother sweet is nigh thee !
Child, I know thee ! Child no more,
But a Poet evermore !
See, see, the Lyre, the Lyre,
In a flame of fire,
Upon the little cradle's top
Flaring, flaring, flaring,
Past the eyesight's bearing.
Awake it from its sleep,
And see if it can keep
Its eyes upon the blaze —
Amaze, amaze !
It stares, it stares, it stares,
It dares what no one dares !
It lifts its little hand into the flame

Unharm'd, and on the strings
Paddles a little tune, and sings,
With dumb endeavour sweetly —
Bard art thou completely !
Little child
O' th' western wild,
Bard art thou completely !
Sweetly with dumb endeavour,
A Poet now or never,
Little child
O' th' western wild,
A Poet now or never !

A LITTLE EXTEMPORE

Inclosed in a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, written April 15, 1819.

WHEN they were come into the Faery's Court
They rang — no one at home — all gone to sport
And dance and kiss and love as faeries do
For Faries be as humans lovers true.
Amid the woods they were so lone and wild,
Where even the Robin feels himself exil'd,
And where the very brooks, as if afraid,
Hurry along to some less magic shade.
'No one at home !' the fretful Princess cry'd ;
'And all for nothing such a dreary ride,
And all for nothing my new diamond cross ;
No one to see my Persian feathers toss,
No one to see my Ape, my Dwarf, my Fool,
Or how I pace my Otaheitian mule.
Ape, Dwarf, and Fool, why stand you gaping
there,
Burst the door open, quick — or I declare
I'll switch you soundly and in pieces tear.'
The Dwarf began to tremble, and the Ape
Star'd at the Fool, the Fool was all agape,
The Princess grasp'd her switch, but just in
time
The dwarf with piteous face began to rhyme.
'O mighty Princess, did you ne'er hear tell
What your poor servants know but too too
well ?
Know you the three great crimes in Faeryland ?
The first, alas ! poor Dwarf, I understand,
I made a whipstock of a faery's wand ;
The next is snoring in their company ;
The next, the last, the direst of the three,
Is making free when they are not at home.
I was a Prince — a baby prince — my doom,
You see, I made a whipstock of a wand,
My top has henceforth slept in faery land.
He was a Prince, the Fool, a grown-up Prince,
But he has never been a King's son since
He fell a snoring at a faery Ball.

Yon poor Ape was a Prince, and he poor thing
 Picklock'd a faery's boudoir — now no king
 But ape — so pray your highness stay awhile,
 'Tis sooth indeed, we know it to our sorrow —
 Persist and you may be an ape to-morrow.'
 While the Dwarf spake, the Princess, all for
 spite,

Peel'd the brown hazel twig to lily white,
 Clench'd her small teeth, and held her lips
 apart,

Try'd to look unconcern'd with beating heart.
 They saw her highness had made up her mind,
 A-quavering like the reeds before the wind —
 And they had had it, but O happy chance!
 The Ape for very fear began to dance
 And grinn'd as all his ugliness did ache —
 She staid her vixen fingers for his sake,
 He was so very ugly: then she took
 Her pocket-mirror and began to look
 First at herself and then at him, and then
 She smil'd at her own beauteous face again.
 Yet for all this — for all her pretty face —
 She took it in her head to see the place.
 Women gain little from experience
 Either in Lovers, husbands, or expense.
 The more their beauty the more fortune too —
 Beauty before the wide world never knew —
 So each fair reasons — tho' it oft miscarries.
 She thought *her* pretty face would please the
 fairies.

'My darling Ape, I wont whip you to-day,
 Give me the Picklock sirrah and go play.'
 They all three wept but counsel was as vain
 As crying cup biddy to drops of rain.
 Yet lingering by did the sad Ape forth draw
 The Picklock from the Pocket in his Jaw.
 The Princess took it, and dismounting straight
 Tripp'd in blue silver'd slippers to the gate
 And touch'd the wards, the Door full courteous
 Opened — she enter'd with her servants three.
 Again it clos'd and there was nothing seen
 But the Mule grazing on the herbage green.
End of Canto XII.

CANTO THE XIII

The Mule no sooner saw himself alone
 Than he prick'd up his Ears — and said 'well
 done;

At least unhappy Prince I may be free —
 No more a Princess shall side-saddle me.
 O King of Otaheite — tho' a Mule,
 "Aye, every inch a King" — tho' "Fortune's
 Fool,"

Well done — for by what Mr. Dwarf said
 I would not give a sixpence for her head.'
 Even as he spake he trotted in high glee
 To the knotty side of an old Pollard tree,

And rubb'd his sides against the mossed bark
 Till his Girths burst and left him naked stark
 Except his Bridle — how get rid of that
 Buckled and tied with many a twist and plait
 At last it struck him to pretend to sleep,
 And then the thievish Monkeys down would
 creep

And filch the unpleasant trammels quite away
 No sooner thought of than adown he lay,
 Shamm'd a good snore — the Monkey-men de-
 scended

And whom they thought to injure they be-
 friended.

They hung his Bridle on a topmost bough
 And off he went run, trot, or anyhow —

SPENSERIAN STANZAS ON CHARLES ARMO-
TAGE BROWN

Inclosed in a letter to George and George-
 ana Keats, April 16 or 17, 1819: 'Brown this
 morning is writing some Spenserian stanza
 against Mrs., Miss Brawne and me; so I shall
 amuse myself with him a little: in the manner
 of Spenser.'

HE is to weet a melancholy Carle:
 Thin in the waist, with bushy head of hair,
 As hath the seeded thistle when in parle
 It holds the Zephyr, ere it sendeth fair
 Its light balloons into the summer air;
 There to his beard had not begun to bloom,
 No brush had touch'd his chin, or razor
 sheer;
 No care had touch'd his cheek with mort-
 doom,
 But new he was, and bright, as scarf from Per-
 sian loom.

Ne cared he for wine, or half-and-half;
 Ne cared he for fish, or flesh, or fowl;
 And sauces held he worthless as the chaff;
 He's deigned the swineherd at the wassa-
 bowl;
 Ne with lewd ribbalds sat he cheek by jowl
 Ne with sly Lemans in the scorner's chair;
 But after water-brooks this Pilgrim's soul
 Panted, and all his food was woodland air;
 Though he would oft-times feast on gilliflowers
 rare.

The slang of cities in no wise he knew;
 Tipping the wink to him was heathen Greek
 He sipp'd no 'olden Tom,' or 'ruin blue,'
 Or Nantz, or cherry-brandy, drunk full meel.

By many a Damsel hoarse, and rouge of cheek;
 Nor did he know each aged Watchman's beat,
 Nor in obscured purlieus would he seek
 For curled Jewesses, with ankles neat,
 Who, as they walk abroad, make tinkling with their feet.

'TWO OR THREE POSIES'

At the close of a letter, April 17, 1819, to his sister Fanny, Keats writes: 'Mr. and Mrs. Dilke are coming to dine with us to-day [at Wentworth Place]. They will enjoy the country after Westminster. O there is nothing like fine weather, and health, and Books, and a fine country, and a contented Mind, and diligent habit of reading and thinking, and an amulet against the ennui — and, please heaven, a little claret wine cool out of a cellar a mile deep — with a few or a good many ratafia cakes — a rocky basin to bathe in, a strawberry bed to say your prayers to Flora in, a pad nag to go you ten miles or so; two or three sensible people to chat with; two or three spiteful folks to spar with; two or three odd fishes to laugh at and two or three numskulls to argue with — instead of using dumb bells on a rainy day.'

Two or three Posies
 With two or three simples —
 Two or three Noses
 With two or three pimples —
 Two or three wise men
 And two or three ninny's —
 Two or three purses
 And two or three guineas —
 Two or three raps
 At two or three doors —
 Two or three naps
 Of two or three hours —
 Two or three Cats
 And two or three mice —
 Two or three sprats
 At a very great price —
 Two or three sandies
 And two or three tabbies —
 Two or three dandies
 And two Mrs. mum!
 Two or three Smiles
 And two or three frowns —
 Two or three Miles
 To two or three towns —

Two or three pegs
 For two or three bonnets —
 Two or three dove eggs
 To hatch into sonnets —

A PARTY OF LOVERS

'Somewhere in the *Spectator* is related an account of a man inviting a party of stutters and squinters to his table. It would please me more to scrape together a party of lovers — not to dinner but to tea. There would be no fighting as among knights of old.' Keats to George and Georgiana Keats, September 17, 1819. The play on names seems to indicate some trifling reference to Keats's publishers of Taylor and Hessey.

PENSIVE they sit, and roll their languid eyes,
 Nibble their toast, and cool their tea with sighs,
 Or else forget the purpose of the night,
 Forget their tea — forget their appetite.
 See with cross'd arms they sit — ah! happy crew,

The fire is going out and no one rings
 For coals, and therefore no coals Betty brings.
 A fly is in the milk-pot — must he die

By a humane society?

No, no; there Mr. Werter takes his spoon,
 Inserts it, dips the handle, and lo! soon
 The little straggler, sav'd from perils dark,
 Across the teaboard draws a long wet mark.

Arise! take snuffers by the handle,
 There's a large cauliflower in each candle.
 A winding-sheet, ah me! I must away
 To No. 7, just beyond the circus gay.
 'Alas, my friend! your coat sits very well;
 Where may your Taylor live?' 'I may not tell.

O pardon me — I'm absent now and then.
 Where *might* my Taylor live? I say again
 I cannot tell, let me no more be teaz'd —
 He lives in Wapping, *might* live where he pleas'd.'

TO GEORGE KEATS

WRITTEN IN SICKNESS

This is from a transcript by George Keats, and dated 1819; but Keats's letters do not disclose any sickness during that year which would be likely to call forth the lines, and the date is probably 1820, if indeed we are author-

ized to refer this poem to John Keats. It is not impossible that it was written by Tom Keats in 1818.

BROTHER belov'd if health shall smile again,
Upon this wasted form and fever'd cheek:
If e'er returning vigour bid these weak
And languid limbs their gladsome strength re-
gain,

Well may thy brow the placid glow retain
Of sweet content and thy pleas'd eye may
speak

The conscious self applause, but should I seek
To utter what this heart can feel, — Ah! vain
Were the attempt! Yet kindest friends while
o'er

My couch ye bend, and watch with tenderness
The being whom your cares could e'en restore,
From the cold grasp of Death, say can you
guess

The feelings which these lips can ne'er ex-
press?

Feelings, deep fix'd in grateful memory's store.

ON OXFORD

Charles Armitage Brown, writing to Henry Snook from Hampstead 24 March, 1820, says: 'Tom shall have one of his [Keats's] bits of comic verses, — I met with them only yesterday, but they have been written long ago, — it is a song on the City of Oxford.'

The verses were also copied by Keats in a letter to Reynolds, given below on p. 269, as a satirical criticism of Wordsworth.

THE Gothic looks solemn,
The plain Doric column
Supports an old Bishop and Crozier;
The mouldering arch,
Shaded o'er by a larch,
Stands next door to Wilson the Hosier.

Vice, — that is, by turns, —
O'er pale faces mourns
The black tassell'd trencher and common hat
The charity boy sings,
The Steeple-bell rings
And as for the Chancellor — *dominat*.

There are plenty of trees,
And plenty of ease,
And plenty of fat deer for Parsons;
And when it is venison,
Short is the benison, —
Then each on a leg or thigh fastens.

TO A CAT

These verses were addressed by Keats to a cat belonging to Mrs. Reynolds of Little Brtain, the mother of his friend John Hamilton Reynolds. Mrs. Reynolds gave the verses to her son-in-law, Tom Hood, who published them in his *Comic Annual* for 1830.

CAT! who has[t] pass'd thy grand clima[ti-
c

teric,

How many mice and rats hast in thy days
Destroy'd? — How many tit-bits stolen

Gaze

With those bright languid segments green, and
prick

Those velvet ears — but pr'ythee do not stick

Thy latent talons in me — and upraise

Thy gentle mew — and tell me all thy frays
Of fish and mice, and rats and tender chick:

Nay, look not down, nor lick thy dainty wrist

For all the wheezy asthma, — and for all
Thy tail's tip is nick'd off — and though th[ou]
fists

Of many a maid has given thee many a mau[se]
Still is that fur as soft as when the lists

In youth thou enter'dst on glass-bottled wal

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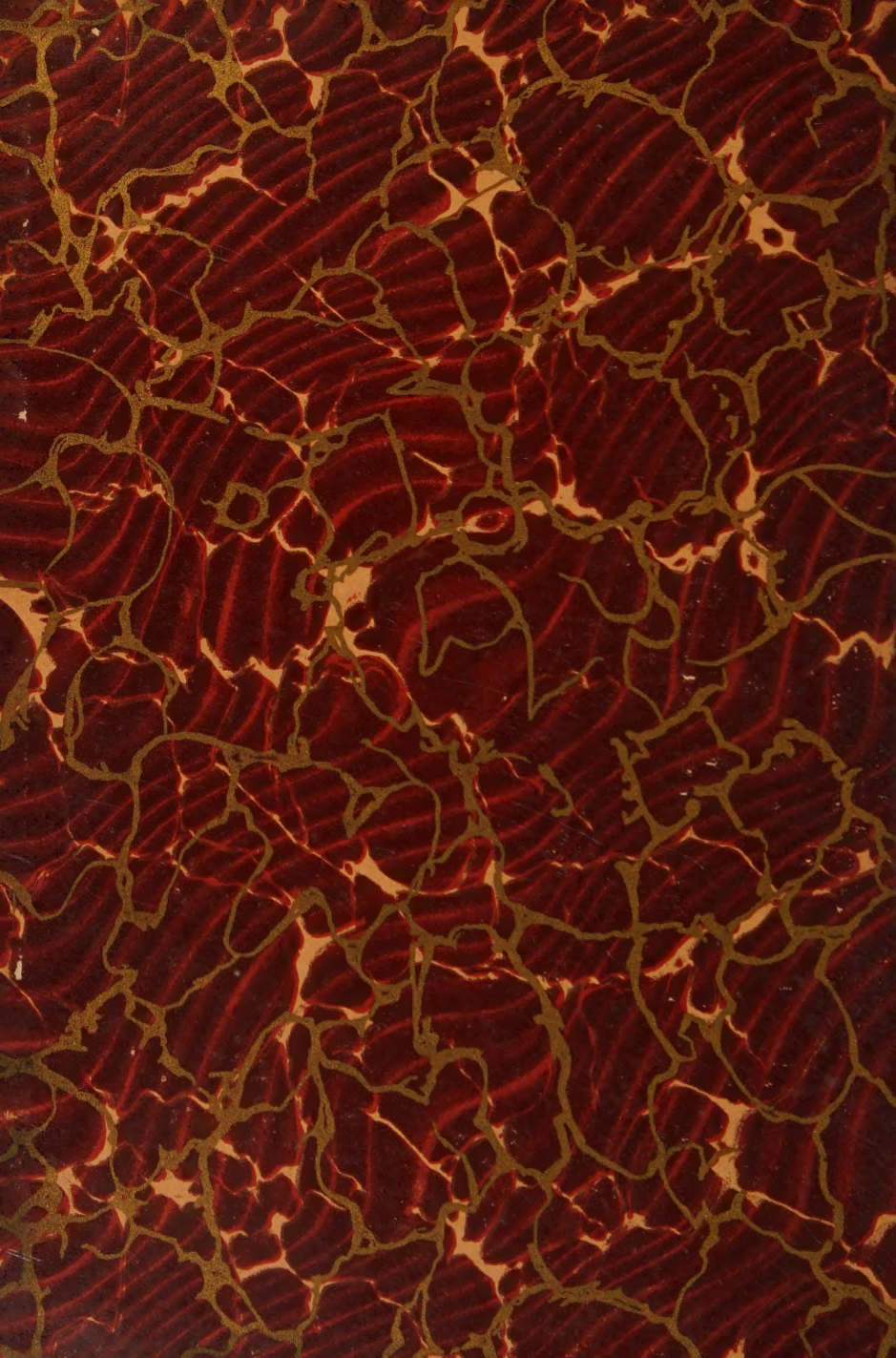
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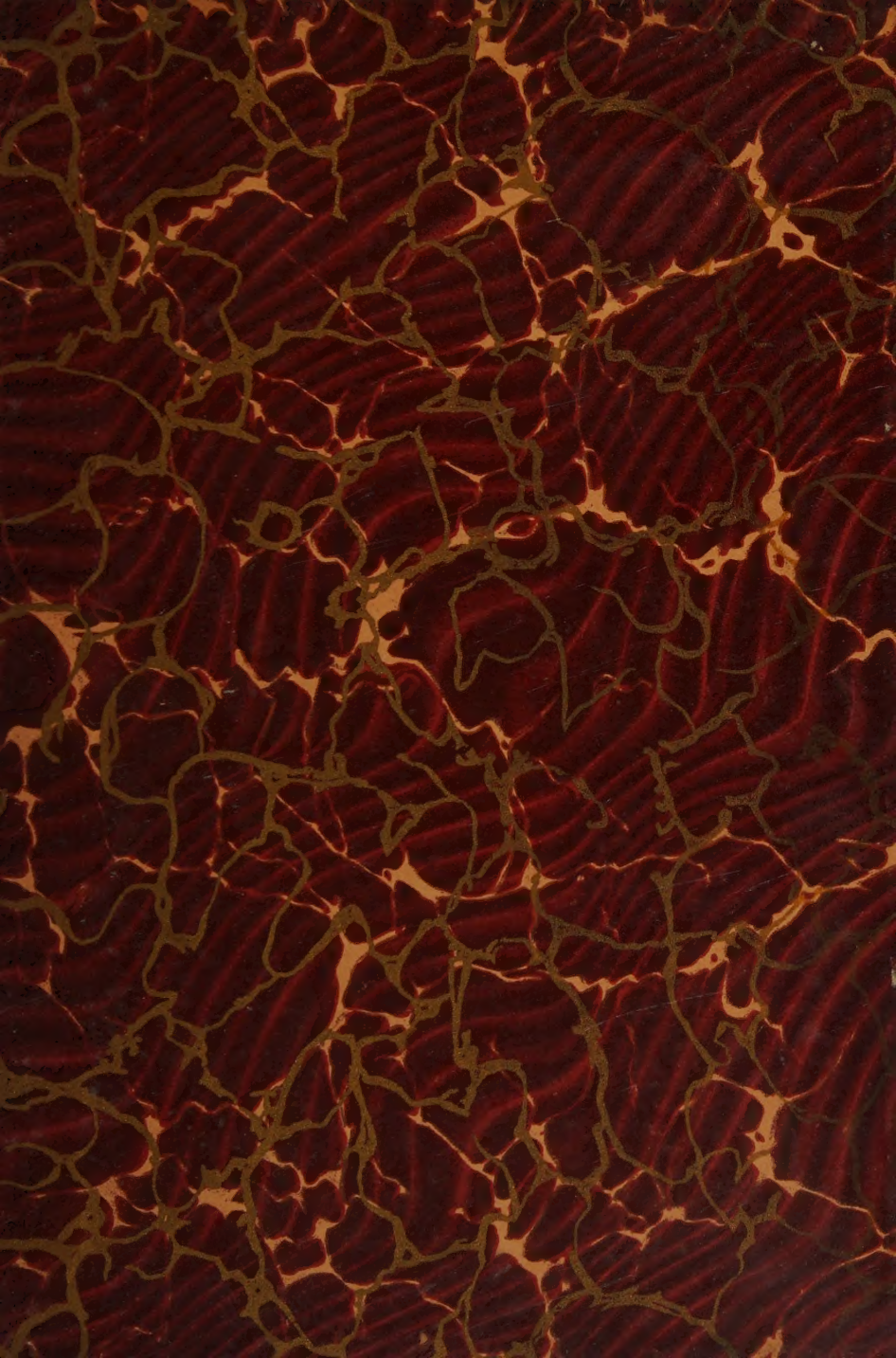
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